THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy and Science Fiction

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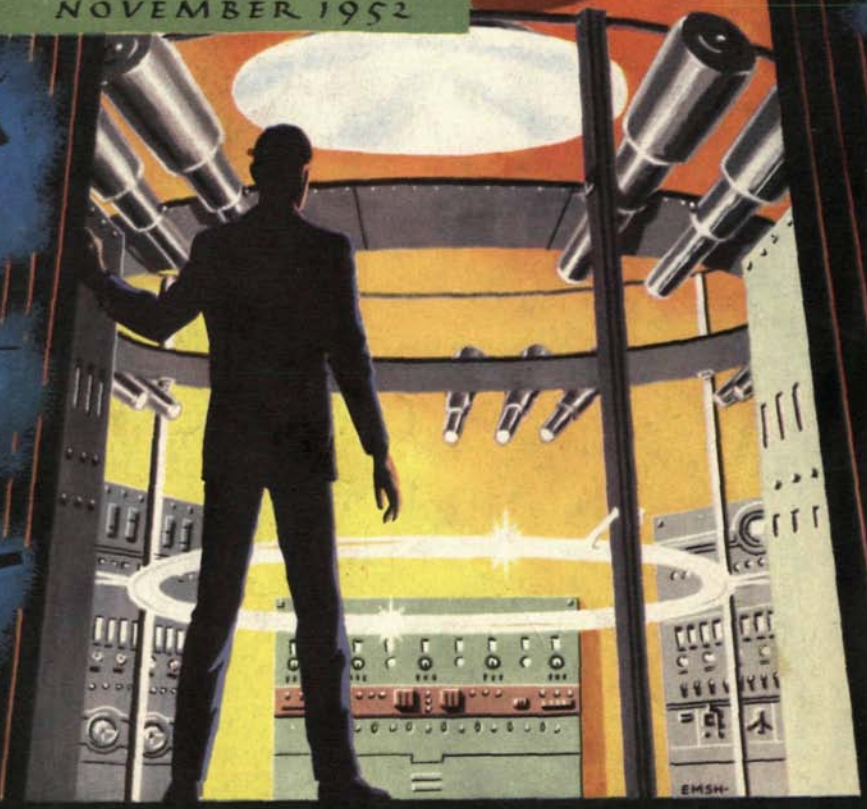

BRING THE JUBILEE — **Ward Moore**

The Wilderness — RAY BRADBURY
Winning Recipe — MILDRED CLINGERMAN
The Yellow Catfish — VANCE RANDOLPH

also PHILIP K. DICK, DAVID GRINNELL, EVELYN E. SMITH

The best stories of fantasy and science fiction, new and old

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THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy and Science Fiction

VOLUME 3, No. 7 NOVEMBER

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(from Bring the Jubilee, by Ward Moore)

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It's a healthy fact that the science-fantasy field is constantly producing new authors with freshly individual attitudes. Beside the stories of the Old Masters, and often quite on a level with them, you've been seeing in the past year or two the works of Kris Neville, Chad Oliver, Mildred Clingerman, Zenna Henderson, J. T. M'Intosh — new writers of a stature to guarantee the future high quality of the field. One of the most striking of these, in our opinion, is Philip K. Dick, who made his debut only a few months ago. In The Little Movement, *the first of his many contributions to F&SF, Mr. Dick combines a startling idea (which no introduction should even hint at) with a modern simplicity and directness of writing guaranteed to produce nightmares which no Gothic elaboration could rival.*

The Little Movement

by PHILIP K. DICK

THE MAN was sitting on the sidewalk, holding the box shut with his hands. Impatiently the lid of the box moved, straining up against his fingers.

"All right," the man murmured. Sweat rolled down his face, damp, heavy sweat. He opened the box slowly, holding his fingers over the opening. From inside a metallic drumming came, a low insistent vibration, rising frantically as the sunlight filtered into the box.

A small head appeared, round and shiny, and then another. More heads jerked into view, peering, craning to see. "I'm first," one head shrilled. There was a momentary squabble, then quick agreement.

The man sitting on the sidewalk lifted out the little metal figure with trembling hands. He put it down on the sidewalk and began to wind it awkwardly, thick-fingered. It was a brightly painted soldier with helmet and gun, standing at attention. As the man turned the key the little soldier's arms went up and down. It struggled eagerly.

Along the sidewalk two women were coming, talking together. They glanced down curiously at the man sitting on the sidewalk, at the box and the shiny figure in the man's hands.

"Fifty cents," the man muttered. "Get your child something to —"

"Wait!" a faint metallic voice came. "Not them!"

The man broke off abruptly. The two women looked at each other and

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then at the man and the little metal figure. They went hurriedly on.

The little soldier gazed up and down the street, at the cars, the shoppers. Suddenly it trembled, rasping in a low, eager voice.

The man swallowed. "Not the kid," he said thickly. He tried to hold onto the figure, but metal fingers dug quickly into his hand. He gasped.

"Tell them to stop!" the figure shrilled. "Make them stop!" The metal figure pulled away and clicked across the sidewalk, its legs stiff and rigid.

The boy and his father slowed to a stop, looking down at it with interest. The sitting man smiled feebly; he watched the figure approach them, turning from side to side, its arms going up and down.

"Get something for your boy. An exciting playmate. Keep him company."

The father grinned, watching the figure coming up to his shoe. The little soldier bumped into the shoe. It wheezed and clicked. It stopped moving.

"Wind it up!" the boy cried.

His father picked up the figure. "How much?"

"Fifty cents." The salesman rose unsteadily, clutching the box against him. "Keep him company. Amuse him."

The father turned the figure over. "You sure you want it, Bobby?"

"Sure! Wind it up!" Bobby reached for the little soldier. "Make it go!"

"I'll buy it," the father said. He reached into his pocket and handed the man a dollar bill.

Clumsily, staring away, the salesman made change.

The situation was excellent.

The little figure lay quietly, thinking everything over. All circumstances had conspired to bring about optimum solution. The Child might not have wanted to stop, or the Adult might not have had any money. Many things might have gone wrong; it was awful even to think about them. But everything had been perfect.

The little figure gazed up in pleasure, where it lay in the back of the car. It had correctly interpreted certain signs: the Adults were in control, and so the Adults had money. They had power, but their power made it difficult to get to them. Their power, and their size. With the Children it was different. *They* were small, and it was easier to talk to them. They accepted everything they heard, and they did what they were told. Or so it was said at the factory.

The little metal figure lay, lost in dreamy, delicious thoughts.

The boy's heart was beating quickly. He ran upstairs and pushed the door open. After he had closed the door carefully he went to the bed and sat down. He looked down at what he held in his hands.

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"What's your name?" he said. "What are you called?"

The metal figure did not answer.

"I'll introduce you around. You must get to know everybody. You'll like it here."

Bobby laid the figure down on the bed. He ran to the closet and dragged out a bulging carton of toys.

"This is Bonzo," he said. He held up a pale stuffed rabbit. "And Fred." He turned the rubber pig around for the soldier to see. "And Teddo, of course. This is Teddo."

He carried Teddo to the bed and laid him beside the soldier. Teddo lay silent, gazing up at the ceiling with glassy eyes. Teddo was a brown bear, with wisps of straw poking out of his joints.

"And what shall we call you?" Bobby said. "I think we should have a council and decide." He paused, considering. "I'll wind you up so we can all see how you work."

He began to wind the figure carefully, turning it over on its face. When the key was tight he bent down and set the figure on the floor.

"Go on," Bobby said. The metal figure stood still. Then it began to whirr and click. Across the floor it went, walking with stiff jerks. It changed directions suddenly and headed toward the door. At the door it stopped. Then it turned to some building blocks lying about and began to push them into a heap.

Bobby watched with interest. The little figure struggled with the blocks, piling them into a pyramid. At last it climbed up onto the blocks and turned the key in the lock.

Bobby scratched his head, puzzled. "Why did you do that?" he said The figure climbed back down and came across the room toward Bobby, clicking and whirring. Bobby and the stuffed animals regarded it with surprise and wonder. The figure reached the bed and halted.

"Lift me up!" it cried impatiently, in its thin, metallic voice. "Hurry up! Don't just sit there!"

Bobby's eyes grew large. He stared, blinking. The stuffed animals said nothing.

"Come on!" the little soldier shouted.

Bobby reached down. The soldier seized his hand tightly. Bobby cried out.

"Be still," the soldier commanded. "Lift me up to the bed. I have things to discuss with you, things of great importance."

Bobby put it down on the bed beside him. The room was silent, except for the faint whirring of the metal figure.

"This is a nice room," the soldier said presently. "A very nice room."

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Bobby drew back a little on the bed.

"What's the matter?" the soldier said sharply, turning its head and staring up.

"Nothing."

"What is it?" The little figure peered at him. "You're not afraid of me, are you?"

Bobby shifted uncomfortably.

"Afraid of *me?*" The soldier laughed. "I'm only a little metal man, only six inches high." It laughed again and again. It ceased abruptly. "Listen. I'm going to live here with you for awhile. I won't hurt you; you can count on that. I'm a friend — a good friend."

It peered up a little anxiously. "But I want you to do things for me. You won't mind doing things, will you? Tell me: how many are there of them in your family?"

Bobby hesitated.

"Come, how many of *them?* Adults."

"Three. . . . Daddy, and Mother, and Foxie."

"Foxie? Who is that?"

"My grandmother."

"Three of them." The figure nodded. "I see. Only three. But others come from time to time? Other Adults visit this house?"

Bobby nodded.

"Three. That's not too many. Three are not so much of a problem. According to the factory —"

It broke off. "Good. Listen to me. I don't want you to say anything to them about me. I'm *your* friend, your secret friend. They won't be interested in hearing about me. I'm not going to hurt you, remember. You have nothing to fear. I'm going to live right here, with you."

It watched the boy intently, lingering over the last words.

"I'm going to be a sort of private teacher. I'm going to teach you things, things to do, things to say. Just like a tutor should. Will you like that?"

Silence.

"Of course you'll like it. We could even begin now. Perhaps you want to know the proper way to address me. Do you want to learn that?"

"Address you?" Bobby stared down.

"You are to call me. . . ." The figure paused, hesitating. It drew itself together, proudly. "You are to call me — My Lord."

Bobby leaped up, his hands to his face.

"My Lord," the figure said relentlessly. "My Lord. You don't really need to start now. I'm tired." The figure sagged. "I'm almost run down. Please wind me up again in about an hour."

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The figure began to stiffen. It gazed up at the boy. "In an hour. Will you wind me tight? You will, won't you?"

Its voice trailed off into silence.

Bobby nodded slowly. "All right," he murmured. "All right."

It was Tuesday. The window was open, and warm sunlight came drifting into the room. Bobby was away at school; the house was silent and empty. The stuffed animals were back in the closet.

My Lord lay on the dresser, propped up, looking out the window, resting contentedly.

There came a faint humming sound. Something small flew suddenly into the room. The small object circled a few times and then came slowly to rest on the white cloth of the dresser-top, beside the metal soldier. It was a tiny toy airplane.

"How is it going?" the airplane said. "Is everything all right so far?"

"Yes," My Lord said. "And the others?"

"Not so good. Only a handful of them managed to reach Children."

The soldier gasped in pain.

"The largest group fell into the hands of Adults. As you know, that is not satisfactory. It is very difficult to control Adults. They break away, or they wait until the spring is unwound —"

"I know." My Lord nodded glumly.

"The news will most certainly continue to be bad. We must be prepared for it."

"There's more. Tell me!"

"Frankly, about half of them have already been destroyed, stepped on by Adults. A dog is said to have broken up one. There's no doubt of it: our only hope is through Children. We must succeed there, if at all."

The little soldier nodded. The messenger was right, of course. They had never considered that a direct attack against the ruling race, the Adults, would win. Their size, their power, their enormous stride would protect them. The toy vender was a good example. He had tried to break away many times, tried to fool them and get loose. Part of the group had to be wound at all times to watch him, and there was that frightening day when he failed to wind them tight, hoping that —

"You're giving the Child instructions?" the airplane asked. "You're preparing him?"

"Yes. He understands that I'm going to be here. Children seem to be like that. As a subject race they have been taught to accept; it's all they can do. I am another teacher, invading his life, giving him orders. Another voice, telling him that —"

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"You've started the second phase?"

"So soon?" My Lord was amazed. "Why? Is it necessary, so quickly?"

"The factory is becoming anxious. Most of the group has been destroyed, as I said."

"I know." My Lord nodded absently. "We expected it, we planned with realism, knowing the chances." It strode back and forth on the dresser-top. "Naturally, many would fall into their hands, the Adults. The Adults are everywhere, in all key positions, important stations. It's the psychology of the ruling race to control each phase of social life. But as long as those who reach Children survive —"

"You were not supposed to know, but outside of yourself, there's only three left. Just three."

"*Three?*" My Lord stared.

"Even those who reached Children have been destroyed right and left. The situation is tragic. That's why they want you to get started with the second phase."

My Lord clenched its fists, its features locked in iron horror. Only three left . . . What hopes they had entertained for this band, venturing out, so little, so dependent on the weather — and on being wound up tight. If only they were larger! The Adults were so huge.

But the Children. What had gone wrong? What had happened to their one chance, their one fragile hope?

"How did it happen? What occurred?"

"No one knows. The factory is in a turmoil. And now they're running short of materials. Some of the machines have broken down and nobody knows how to run them." The airplane coasted toward the edge of the dresser. "I must be getting back. I'll report later to see how you're getting on."

The airplane flew up into the air and out through the open window. My Lord watched it, dazed.

What could have happened? They had been so certain about the Children. It was all planned —

It meditated.

Evening. The boy sat at the table, staring absently at his geography book. He shifted unhappily, turning the pages. At last he closed the book. He slid from his chair and went to the closet. He was reaching into the closet for the bulging carton when a voice came drifting to him from the dresser-top.

"Later. You can play with them later. I must discuss something with you."

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The boy turned back to the table, his face listless and tired. He nodded, sinking down against the table, his head on his arm.

"You're not asleep, are you?" My Lord said.

"No."

"Then listen. Tomorrow when you leave school I want you to go to a certain address. It's not far from the school. It's a toy store. Perhaps you know it. Don's Toyland."

"I haven't any money."

"It doesn't matter. This has all been arranged for long in advance. Go to Toyland and say to the man: 'I was told to come for the package.' Can you remember that? 'I was told to come for the package.' "

"What's in the package?"

"Some tools, and some toys for you. To go along with me." The metal figure rubbed its hands together. "Nice modern toys, two toy tanks and a machine gun. And some spare parts for —"

There were footsteps on the stairs outside.

"Don't forget," My Lord said nervously. "You'll do it? This phase of the plan is extremely important."

It wrung its hands together in anxiety.

The boy brushed the last strands of hair into place. He put his cap on and picked up his school books. Outside, the morning was gray and dismal. Rain fell, slowly, soundlessly.

Suddenly the boy set his books down again. He went to the closet and reached inside. His fingers closed over Teddo's leg, and he drew him out.

The boy sat on the bed, holding Teddo against his cheek. For a long time he sat with the stuffed bear, oblivious to everything else.

Abruptly he looked toward the dresser. My Lord was lying outstretched, silent. Bobby went hurriedly back to the closet and laid Teddo into the carton. He crossed the room to the door. As he opened the door the little metal figure on the dresser stirred.

"Remember Don's Toyland. . . ."

The door closed. My Lord heard the Child going heavily down the stairs, clumping unhappily. My Lord exulted. It was working out all right. Bobby wouldn't want to do it, but he would. And once the tools and parts and weapons were safely inside there wouldn't be any chance of failure.

Perhaps they would capture a second factory. Or better yet: build dies and machines themselves to turn out larger Lords. Yes, if only they could be larger, just a little larger. They were so small, so very tiny, only a few inches high. Would the Movement fail, pass away, because they were too tiny, too fragile?

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But with tanks and guns! Yet, of all the packages so carefully secreted in the toyshop, this would be the only one, the only one to be —

Something moved.

My Lord turned quickly. From the closet Teddo came, lumbering slowly.

"Bonzo," he said. "Bonzo, go over by the window. I think it came in that way, if I'm not mistaken."

The stuffed rabbit reached the window-sill in one skip. He huddled, gazing outside. "Nothing yet."

"Good." Teddo moved toward the dresser. He looked up. "Little Lord, please come down. You've been up there much too long."

My Lord stared. Fred, the rubber pig, was coming out of the closet. Puffing, he reached the dresser. "I'll go up and get it," he said. "I don't think it will come down by itself. We'll have to help it."

"What are you doing?" My Lord cried. The rubber pig was settling himself on his haunches, his ears down flat against his head. "What's happening?"

Fred leaped. And at the same time Teddo began to climb swiftly, catching onto the handles of the dresser. Expertly, he gained the top. My Lord was edging toward the wall, glancing down at the floor, far below.

"So this is what happened to the others," it murmured. "I understand. An Organization, waiting for us. Then everything is known."

It leaped.

When they had gathered up the pieces and had got them under the carpet, Teddo said:

"That part was easy. Let's hope the rest won't be any harder."

"What do you mean?" Fred said.

"The package of toys. The tanks and guns."

"Oh, we can handle them. Remember how we helped next door when that first little Lord, the first one we ever encountered —"

Teddo laughed. "It did put up quite a fight. It was tougher than this one. But we had the panda bears from across the way."

"We'll do it again," Fred said. "I'm getting so I rather enjoy it."

"Me, too," Bonzo said from the window.

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Wherein our Miss Clingerman offers reassuring evidence that the terrors of a gadget-bedevilled future can be met by the stout of heart and that the sanctity of the kitchen shall prevail.

Winning Recipe

by MILDRED CLINGERMAN

Miss Mersey came downstairs one morning to find the wastebasket maliciously sucking away yesterday's mail before she was ready to discard it. The calendar clock announced the hour in a surprising falsetto, and Miss Mersey recognized the insolence the house machines reserved for her alone.

I ought to be *firm*, she thought. But her chin trembled as it always did when she felt timid. And Miss Mersey so often felt timid. She had no business feeling that way in the enlightened and peaceful year 2002. Her brother kept telling her so, but the more he stamped and yelled, the worse she got.

Miss Mersey shut off the wastebasket and stood quietly before the smug-faced clock, thinking of bullies in general and of the house machines in particular. She hated and feared every one of them. The house was full of mechanical things that sucked, chewed, or blew. Half her days were spent warily punching buttons, moving levers, and reading the tapes the machines stuck out at her like tongues to list their complaints and needs. And lately they seemed to sense her fear of them, spitting and hissing at her with a bully's contempt for weakness. Her brother John was a well-meaning man, she thought, but he couldn't resist gadgets.

"Show some gumption, Clare!" John bellowed when she complained wistfully that she would rather do the housework herself. "Forward! That's the watchword. Fancy not having house machines nowadays. Brace up, show some spunk, some spice!" And often as not, John would stamp right out and buy another machine, even more complicated and frightening — to help, he said, spice up her character.

Her brother came bounding in now, loudly demanding breakfast. The clock announced the hour with precise, baritone dignity.

"You're late again, Clare," John Mersey grumbled. "Can you rush things a bit? Now, none of your falderals, please. You spend too much time in the kitchen. I've been thinking — we ought to streamline that department, too. As a matter of fact, I know just the thing."

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He carefully avoided the stricken look Miss Mersey threw at him.

Until now, John had never interfered with the cooking arrangements. His sister was a superb cook, and John was a man who enjoyed his food. As for Miss Mersey, cooking was her life. Into it she poured all her imagination.

John ignored all her timid protests and finally admitted that the gadget was already ordered and paid for, and would be delivered at any moment. "The Kitchen Autocrat," John told her while he ate, "will cook anything. Now, Clare, stop sniveling. You'll get used to it. It doesn't require a skilled operator. It thinks for itself. You'll see."

With John fed and 'copted off to the city (where his sister suspected he bullied his employees), Miss Mersey sat in the living room and waited for her doom to arrive. She wept a little and thought a great deal, and after a while she was surprised to feel a stubborn resistance crowding out her usual timidity.

"This time," she whispered, "John's gone too far. I'll fight. I don't know just how. But no matter what kind of monster he's bought, I'll fight it to the finish."

Miss Mersey was belatedly discovering that sometimes courage is born of timidity pushed too far. Science, she thought, simply did not take into account people like herself. If science took a giant's stride one year, it took two strides the next. And who knew if science might not one day build mechanical sisters? John would like that. Miss Mersey's jaw hardened.

It was then that she became aware of pounding noises in the kitchen. Her hands fluttered with sudden fear. Had one of John's machines gone berserk? Her heart raced, and she was halfway through the door to the garden before she realized she was running away.

"No." Her face grew pink, and she raised her chin. It was probably only the delivery men with the *thing* John had ordered. She marched sturdily to the kitchen. "Remember, Clare," she told herself, "gumption, spunk, spice."

The two young men in the kitchen grinned at her while she stared at the massive metal contraption that covered three of the walls from floor to ceiling. The Autocrat resembled steel filing cabinets piled one on top of the other. Through the window, she could see her former kitchen appliances set haphazardly in the yard beside a long van.

"I hope we didn't startle you, Miss Mersey," one of the young men said. "Mr. Mersey said we should just walk in." And when she still stared, the young man shuffled his feet and looked at the ceiling. "This is a great little gadget. One of the few creative-thinking machines released for civilian use." He darted a quick look at the pamphlet in his hand. "It says here:

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There is, of course, a limited creative area. While the Kitchen Autocrat is guaranteed by the manufacturer to give excellent service, even extraordinary service, the housewife is urged to refrain from demanding the impossible. Not too much, as yet, is known about machine psychology. The manufacturer cannot be held responsible for the results if the Autocrat is subjected to unusual frustration." He read a few more words to himself. "Oh, yeah, I'm supposed to give you the instruction book. I'll tell you what: You just go study this book while we finish up in here. Won't take long." He pushed Miss Mersey gently through the door and closed it. The pounding noises began again, but Miss Mersey didn't hear them. She was too busy going over the words of the man's speech. She had her weapon.

When the men were gone, Miss Mersey stood before the Autocrat, ready to measure her foe. In one hand she held some of the most difficult of all the recipes she possessed — long, tedious ones requiring hours of human labor. In the other hand she held the instruction book, rapidly rereading it.

Speak clearly, the book ordered, *into the microphone on panel G7*. Miss Mersey found panel G7 and suffered instant stage fright. The book in her hand shook slightly, and she squared her jaw again. *The Autocrat*, she read, *will skillfully substitute when any ingredient called for is not to be found in its storage space*. Miss Mersey decided to play fair. She loaded the maw of the machine with a vast quantity of food from her supplies. Then for an hour she read recipes into the microphone, daring the machine to equal her own artistry.

In exactly 37 minutes, the Autocrat disgorged such an array of food that Miss Mersey was forced to remove it or herself. The kitchen was not large enough for the banquets the Autocrat laid before her. And every dish was perfect. Moreover, the Autocrat surrendered the food all ready on serving dishes, and beautifully garnished. Miss Mersey called a 'copter to deliver it all to the Children's Hospital and wearily began again.

As she stood before the machine, watching the glow of the tiny red lights on the panels, listening to its chuckling purr, she imagined that the little red eyes were watching her with amusement.

"Just you wait," she told the panel. "I'm not licked yet. Take a pig," she ordered loudly, "from three to six weeks old . . ." Miss Mersey had no intention of thrusting a poor little pig into the Autocrat. The machine was supposed to be so wonderful at substitutions — let it worry over the impossibility of constructing a baby pig. This time the Autocrat grumbled a little (while Miss Mersey hummed sweetly to herself), but at the end of two hours out popped a very creditable imitation of roast piglet — and with an apple in its mouth. Now it was the Autocrat that hummed sweetly while Miss Mersey wept. . . .

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It was almost time for John to come home. Miss Mersey sat drearily in the middle of the kitchen floor, surrounded by pickled oysters, quenelles of grouse, boned turkey and squirrel potpie. All simulated, to be sure, but delicious. She could just hear John's crowing remarks. "Not jealous, are you, Clare? Come, come. Show some spice. Trouble with your character, my girl, is too much sugar, not enough spice."

Suddenly Miss Mersey felt she had been raised to a mountaintop and had there received a vision. Trembling, she stood again before panel G7.

"Recipe for little boys," she cried in triumph. "Snips and snails and puppy dogs' tails. That's what little *boys* are made of!"

The Autocrat's panels glowed a fiery red. The hum changed its pitch and became a siren wail. Miss Mersey fled to the safety of the garden. Above the terrible clashing and grinding sounds that followed her, there came a deafening roar. The explosion threw Miss Mersey to her knees, and then all was quiet.

Out of the silence, Miss Mersey haughtily addressed the empty garden. "I hope John's satisfied. It was spice he asked for, and from now on, it's spice he's going to get."

THREE RECIPES FOR PLETOID SOUP

(from Mars, where things are not always what they seem)

I

Take: One pletoid from the liquid North,
And less than tender.
If out completely of the fourth,
Use the sixteenth gender.

Two çinquons, neither green nor red
(Be sure the çinquons áffect.)
If slingled well, the soup is bad
Or almost perfect.

LEONARD WOLF

Note: *After the pandemic vowel change that swept Mars in the sixty-ninth interregnum, Pletoid came to be pronounced Plee toyd (rhymes with sea boyd). All other pronunciations derive from folk-etymology and are not to be trusted.*

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Early in this century the English writer Carter Esplan found his every plot anticipated by a bounder named Burford, and saw no way out of his dilemma save murder — the tragic but ineluctable outcome of which Morley Roberts has told us in his classic short story The Anticipator. *Now, in modern New York, pulp-purveyor Allen San Sebastian meets the same problem — but murder is not the only solution, as David Grinnell relates with that terse neatness which characterized his popular* Extending the Holdings.

Malice Aforethought

by DAVID GRINNELL

It was bad enough that people always mistook Allen San Sebastian for the writer, Marvin Dane. It was worse how the society of the literary world kept shoving the two together until, having met at so many parties and people's homes, they were regarded by the outside world as being friends.

Actually neither liked the other very much — that is always the curse of similarity in competitors. They would have avoided each other if they could, but they couldn't, not without snubbing too many valuable intermediaries. Both wrote stories for the same magazine, both did their best to toady up to the impossible boor who was its editor.

LeClair B. Smith, who was owner and editor of *Grimoire: The Magazine of Spectral Fiction*, was a sharp-dealing, coarse-tongued, self-educated businessman who knew nothing about literature, had a Sunday supplement taste in art, but knew just about everything when it came to squeezing the pennies from the newsdealers and the trusting public. That *Grimoire* was such a success was due to that grim jest of fate that made Smith capable of enjoying a good horror tale when he read one. Possibly it was a subconscious reflection of the sadism that makes so many successful men scornful of the feelings of others. Certainly his handling of his authors instilled horror in those who had perforce to deal with him.

For it was good business to stay in his favor, as San Sebastian well knew, and when you had to depend on Smith's checks for your living, it became a matter of life and death.

San Sebastian had left his parental farm, somewhere in the Middle West, after selling several stories, and had made himself live in the intellectual

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slums of the big city. It was good business; besides, he could concentrate better where there were no infernal roosters to rouse him from bed at half-past four, and he could stay up as late as he pleased with decent conversations and a half-gallon of thick sweet muscatel to sip from. The fly in his ointment was Marvin Dane.

They looked alike, both tall, gaunt, dark-haired. Both had a tendency to squint, both had the same dry sense of humor. But there, insisted San Sebastian, the resemblance ended. He could write and Dane couldn't. Smith, their god and judge, didn't share San Sebastian's opinion. He thought they could both write — and also happened to think that San Sebastian was slipping and Dane coming up.

San Sebastian had begun to realize the horrible truth himself when three stories in a row were rejected as being too similar to material bought just previously. He didn't know what this material was until two months later when he saw a story of Dane's in the latest *Grimoire* that shook him to the core. It was quite identical, plot, writing and all, to one of his stories.

Dane a plagiarist? Hard to see how. San Sebastian, after overcoming his first fit of fury and black anger, found himself lost in a reflex of puzzlement. Nobody, but nobody, saw San Sebastian's stories until he'd written them out, rewritten them, pecked out a copy painfully on his typewriter and then, after waiting a week or so to reread again, made his further corrections.

Dane couldn't possibly have seen the stories before; he couldn't possibly have sneaked into San Sebastian's rooms to copy his tales; and besides San Sebastian never discussed plots with any of his friends. Yet there it was.

By the time the third similar story of Dane's had appeared in print and two other tales of San Sebastian's had been rejected by Smith with the cutting insinuation that San Sebastian must have peeked at Dane's red hot typewriter, Allen San Sebastian was in a state bordering on madness. He could, of course, try to sell his rejected tales to a competitor magazine. But besides the fact that he didn't go over as well with the other editors, they might holler bloody murder when Dane's duplicates hit the stands first.

San Sebastian finally took a friend into his confidence. A rather older man, Carlton Vanney was more steady in his ways, with a bent for the psychological and the occult. He discussed the matter, showed this friend Dane's published stories and his own originals. It was, he insisted, not possible for either writer to have seen the other's work in production.

Vanney, a man of considerable experience, after giving the matter much thought, pointed out that the coincidence of ideas was not precisely new in history. It happened before, it happened often in fact with creative minds that two persons would think of the same thing at the same time. It seems, Vanney said, that the universe moved at a certain pace, and then when con-

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ditions were ready for certain ideas, they developed spontaneously to the first minds that bothered to look for them.

For instance when the science of mathematics had reached an impasse in the old arithmetics, Newton and Leibnitz, separated in two different nations, without knowledge of each other, individually invented and worked out the system of calculus. Again the planet Neptune had been seen by two different astronomers almost simultaneously. Again and again, inventions were duplicated, sometimes at half a world's distance, by minds of similar caliber.

It was as if there were an invisible telegraphic network linking all the minds of the world. So that when a Frenchman named Ader made a wild short flight in a crazy apparatus of canvas and propellers in 1898, two young mechanics in Ohio could conceive a mad inspiration for a miracle that would mature at Kitty Hawk a few years later.

Now, reasoned Carlton Vanney, was it not logical that when two minds as similar as Dane's and San Sebastian's were living within a few blocks of each other, were simultaneously trying to determine the demands of the same mind, LeClair B. Smith's, in the same specialized style of writing, *Grimoire's*, that one should telegraph his ideas to the other, just as a powerful sending station transmits instantly to the receivers of a waiting set? Who is to say which of the two originated the ideas of these stories? It may be San Sebastian glimpsing them from Dane's mind, or vice versa. No personal guilt could be placed.

The reason, the only reason, why Dane was winning was that he was the faster writer. Dane wrote by typewriter the first time and never rewrote. Once he tore his first draft from the keys of his machine, it went within hours to Smith's desk. And it would not be for two weeks before San Sebastian's tortoise-paced prose would reach that same destination.

Marvin Dane was clever, enough, beyond doubt. He had often irked San Sebastian by his boasting that he never cluttered up his imagination with the stories of others. He never read other writers' efforts and he never relied on the classics and anthologies for inspiration. His mind was very probably wide open for stray plots coming over the telepathic ether.

This answer satisfied San Sebastian's curiosity, but left him in an even grimmer plight than before. Was he doomed always to lose out in this ghastly race? Did this spell his end as a writer?

For several days Allen San Sebastian wandered the streets of the big city lost in wonder and despair. There must be an answer, but what, but how? This was to be a struggle to the death — for it was clear that the only obvious course that would clear his future would be Dane's incapacitation.

He could, for instance, break into Dane's apartment and smash his typewriter with an axe. By the time Dane could borrow or buy another machine,

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San Sebastian would have at least one new story on Smith's desk first. But this was obviously an impractical solution. He could pay someone to beat up Dane and put him in a hospital. This too did not exactly appeal to him. Besides, it invited a host of trouble; whom would he get to do it and how could he keep himself from being blackmailed thereafter? As for murder, the idea didn't appeal to him at all.

Then, one afternoon, the idea came to him. Almost in a fever flush, San Sebastian made his way home, closed and locked the door behind him and dashed to his bookcase. Pulling out a volume therein, he seated himself at his desk, took pen in hand and began transcribing the pages of the book that he had opened. Carefully he bent himself to his task.

In two hours he had completed the first writing. Setting the manuscript aside, he waited. Next day he again repeated the process, laboriously copying out the printed pages for a second time. Yet a third day he worked on it, then set up his typewriter and began typing out the pages slowly in his usual painstaking manner. He drew out the work as long as possible.

On the fourth day, upon typing finis to the last page, he clipped all the completed pages together, read through them very carefully once more, and then, taking the various manuscripts into his little kitchenette, burned them each and every one over a jet of his gas stove.

Then he took a rest from literary work for two months.

Now LeClair B. Smith was, as has been said, pretty much of a non-literary businessman, self-educated and self-opinionated. He knew a good horror story when he saw one; and when Marvin Dane submitted a humdinger to him, he bought it on that same day and fitted it into his magazine's schedule. Dane, as has also been said, had the not unadmirable quality of keeping his mind clear of other horror writers' works.

It was very embarrassing when a host of discerning readers and fans flooded the magazine with angry letters for publishing H. P. Lovecraft's *The Rats in the Walls* under the title of *The Mumbling Vermin of Oxham Priory* by Marvin Dane — "A gripping tale of ancestral doom, written especially for *Grimoire* by a modern de Maupassant." It was disastrous for Marvin Dane when Smith not only threw him out of the office but sued him for the return of his money and damages.

And it didn't do Allen San Sebastian any harm when Dane's new stories were constantly returned to him by the office boy unopened, as per editorial orders. You could be sure to find San Sebastian's name in any table of contents in any new issue of *Grimoire*. As for Dane, after that ruinous climax to his literary career, for which he was quite unable to blame anyone but himself and his sizzling typewriter, he became a moderate sort of success as the clerk in a small but select bookstore catering to obscurantist prosody.

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Miss Smith is an extraordinarily versatile young lady; she has contributed to the Irish magazine Slant, *published a children's book on architecture, constructed crossword puzzles for the New York* Times, *and written "vast quantities of beautiful but anonymous stuff for trade journals." Now she turns from these accustomed, if diverse, paths to concoct a hilarious rib on space travel, old-fashioned magic, BEMS or what-have-you. Bet the children didn't have as much fun learning about buildings as you will have with this tender romance between two highly improbable people.*

The Martian and the Magician

by EVELYN E. SMITH

EVER SINCE childhood I had grown accustomed to being followed by Things wherever I went. I was never lonely. There was always a reptilian *zok* from Mars, who changed progressively into a more and more fearsome variety of monster as I grew familiar with the initial horror. I was never harmed, since the *zokk* had to throw so much energy into projecting themselves from Mars (or *Zokk*, as the natives called it) that they had none left with which to execute any malevolent projects.

Naturally the *zokk* do not follow just anyone about. Twenty years before, my father, a small-time sorcerer, had gone on one of the rare expeditions to Mars — rare because the *zokk* consider human beings a table delicacy, which makes earthmen take rather a dim view of the journey. Dad was so miffed when the *zZik* or emperor of the *zokk* ate Dad's best friend that he retaliated by eating the *zZik*'s infant son.

How he managed to do this and yet get back I never found out. Actually, Dad never was more than a second-rate wizard at best. But the publicity he got for his feat enabled him to make quite a good thing of a small shop dealing in jokes, spells, and love potions that he opened in the Times Square neighborhood — where business is brisk in that line of goods.

Sorcery, the history books say, used to be called science up until the latter part of the Twentieth Century. Then the FBI discovered an atomic scientist muttering over his work in what they took to be Russian. He was immediately brought before an investigating committee, soon broke down and

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confessed that he hadn't been speaking Russian at all but chanting a spell to make his atom bomb work.

It turned out that all the scientists had been doing the same thing, making a lot of hoopla about inventing stuff — atom bombs, jet planes, television — when actually they did it all with witchcraft. Seems all the magicians had gone underground since the Age of Enlightenment and had been passing off their feats as science — except for a few unreconstructed gypsies.

The first reaction of the populace was, as usual, to burn the wizards. However, a smart politician, and one of the best sorcerers we ever had, pointed out that without witchcraft modern technology would disappear. "Where would your movies, your refrigerators, your hot and cold running water be?" he asked. Because, of course, all those things are done by magic.

In the next election, running on the Third or Sorcerers' Party ticket, he made mincemeat out of the Republicans and Democrats and was elected president. Enemies whispered that he had bewitched the voting machines, but I know that wasn't true. He won fair and square through mass hypnosis.

Things proceeded apace after sorcerers could come out into the open. We reached the inhabitants of other planets and some of them unfortunately reached us . . . but that's another story. The only ones earthmen couldn't handle in the long run, though, were the *zokk*. They could look at you and just say, without any charms or signs or anything, "Drop dead" and you'd drop dead, no matter how many protective spells you were under. They couldn't project their powers effectively through space — a lucky thing for Dad and me because, although ordinarily they didn't put themselves out for mere earthmen, they sure had it in for us Bennetts.

This brings us to my twenty-first birthday. I was having the usual argument with Dad. "Son," he said, "I want to make you a full partner in the shop. You know I'm not a well man — my heart isn't good — and I want to be sure that when I'm gone you'll be provided for."

"Hell, Dad," I told him, "I don't want to go in for small-time stuff. I want to leave the Solar System, project myself out into the Galazy."

He shook his gray head. "Wiser men than you have tried, Bob, and failed. And they used ships powered by hundreds and hundreds of poltergeists. You couldn't even begin to afford a dozen."

"Poltergeist power!" I sneered. "I want to get there by thought projection, like the *zokk*." The *zokk* could reach outer space easily enough but, being awful snobs, they rarely bothered.

"No, no, Bob, you mustn't try that!" Dad pulled his beard in agitation. "Earthmen can't manage thought projection and most of those who've tried have gone mad. It does something to our brain cells. Promise me you'll give up your experiments."

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"Nonsense, Dad. Look, I can thought-project a little even now." I sent his *Kabala* zooming across the room. I was pretty proud of myself, because up to then I hadn't been able to levitate anything bigger than a pocket edition.

He got all excited — jealous, I thought. "You muttered a spell under your breath!"

"I did not either," I said, hurt.

"Sorry, son." He calmed down. "It must have been your subconscious muttering the spell. What you ought to do is see a good psychiatrist. People say Dr. McCrindle is one of the best witch-doctors."

That's always the way when you discover something new; everybody thinks you're crazy. Still, no use arguing with Dad — if my theories bore fruit I would be doing him and thousands like him out of their livelihood.

I got up. "Well, I can't sit around talking any longer. Got a date with the prettiest girl on Broadway." And, smoothing down my hair with a few drops of our highest-priced love potion, I was off to meet Linda.

I whistled for my Thing as I left the shop — that always annoyed them — but no *zok* appeared. Come to think of it, I hadn't seen one around for some time; but I knew that every now and then the one currently assigned to me would go off on a bender. Poor things, they didn't ordinarily get much chance to travel. The *zZik* didn't like to let his subjects pick up any democratic foolishness from visiting foreign parts.

I was just as happy, because when I was with Linda three was definitely a crowd — even if the third was a scaly man-eating lizard. She was waiting for me inside the little bistro we always patronized, and she was looking as beautiful as ever.

"Hello, Bob," she greeted me, "you don't seem very happy. Anything wrong?"

"Not really." We sat down at our usual table. "Dad wants me to become a full partner in the shop, but I feel I'm not the type to spend the rest of my life behind a counter."

"You're right, Bob. You're meant for something better."

I told her my plans to thought-project a ship beyond the Solar System. I even showed her. "Look!" and I lifted the cruet stand six feet above the table. Only one vinegar bottle fell off.

The proprietor came over. "Listen, magic man, any more funny business and out you go on your ear."

. . . I got home a little after midnight, went through the darkened shop to our little apartment in the back. Dad wasn't in the living room. Tom, our black cat, sat in Dad's easy chair. "Where's Dad, Tom?" I asked.

Of course Tom couldn't answer; he could only meow. He wouldn't be

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able to speak until his sentence was up, which would be another eight years. The authorities had turned him into a cat for sorcery with intention to defraud.

But he led the way into the bedroom and there was Dad lying on the bed, gasping. His face was a funny color.

"I'll get a doctor!" I yelled.

He shook his head weakly. "No use, Bob. I know I'm dying. But, before I go, there's something I must tell you, something you must know. . . ."

"Yes, Dad?"

"Bob, you're not . . . you're not. . . ." With a horrible gurgle, he fell back against the pillows. He'd died without finishing whatever it was he was trying to say.

Well, there I was, stuck with the shop. I could sell it to finance my experiments, but I knew well enough that's just what Dad wouldn't have wanted me to do. I couldn't make up my mind what the next step should be.

. . . I was sitting in the shop one afternoon a couple of days after the funeral, waiting for Linda to bring some sandwich fixings for a picnic lunch, when a steely-eyed character breezed in, flashing a badge.

"Bob Bennett?" I admitted my identity. "I'm from the FBI, investigating *zokk* activity. I understand you're being followed by Things."

"Haven't seen 'em for weeks," I told him. "Besides, I'm used to them; they don't bother me." I wished he would go away. I was getting hungry.

"Perhaps you'll be interested to know," he said, "that they've developed full-power projection."

This put another face on things. As long as the *zokk* just hovered about trying to scare me, that was okay, but if they now had the power to injure me. . . . "What precautions would you suggest I take?" I asked.

"Put yourself under our protection. We'll form a cordon around you at all times. Even a *zok* would hesitate to attack 50 or 60 of us, charmed to the teeth."

"Supposing it takes another shape," I pointed out. "Then how'll you know what it is? It might even pretend to be one of your men."

"That's easy. Because we've developed a *zokk*-finder." He showed me a small box-like gadget. "See this? Whenever I come within a hundred yards of a suspected *zok*, I press this button. If it is a *zok*, the dial flashes purple."

He pressed the button to show me. Just then Linda walked in the door, carrying a large paper bag. The dial flashed purple.

I laughed myself sick. "And this is government efficiency!" I howled. "That's one hell of a *zokk*-finder!"

The FBI man's face was pale. "It works all right, Bennett. This is a *zok*."

"Nonsense!" I told him angrily. "This is my girl and she isn't a *zok*."

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"Very well," he retorted, just as mad as I was, "I'll prove to you that she's a *zok!* I'll recite a spell for turning things into their proper forms."

He took out a piece of chalk and made appropriate symbols on the floor, muttering to himself meanwhile. I watched attentively. Government spells were generally classified as top secret and I certainly could use this one in my business if it worked.

It worked all right. Tom — and I must say he was a lot better-looking as a cat — streaked past us in human shape yelling "Me for the straight and narrow, fellows," as he charged out the door.

Then I looked at Linda. Her face was covered with green scales; she now had four arms instead of two and double the number of red claws. Her three eyes flashed purple. Yet, she looked more beautiful than ever to me.

But the FBI man wasn't paying any attention to her. He was staring at me in horror. I looked down. My pin-stripe had slid down to disclose a set of green scales. I had two sets of arms. I could see in four dimensions. In short, I was a *zok* too.

I looked at Linda, enlightenment dawning upon me. "Then I'm a . . . ?"

"Yes, your highness. The sorcerer who kidnaped you changed you into human form instead of eating you. *Zokk* are poisonous to the human system, as even a *yuj* would know. With typical cheap human sentimentality, Bennett raised you as his own son. You are, of course, Prince *zZuk*, heir apparent to the throne of *Zokk*. We've been trying to get you back for years, but only recently have we developed our thought projection far enough to get sufficient power to take you. We were afraid you might not return voluntarily."

I . . . a *zok* . . . a Martian . . . a prince. The Galazy lay open before me. "I'll go back voluntarily," I murmured, taking her four little hands in one of mine, "on one condition, that you'll be my wife and rule *Zokk* with me. . . . When *zZik* passes on, of course," I added quickly. "Which won't be too long," I thought to myself.

Three pairs of eyelashes swept her exquisitely scabrous emerald cheeks. "I am yours, *zZuk*," she whispered.

"But what'll we do with this fellow from the FBI?" I wanted to know. "Can't release him until we get away."

"Dearest," she said apologetically, "in my anxiety to be with you I brought bread but forgot to get anything to put inside the sandwiches."

"Can you cook?" I asked her.

She drew herself up haughtily. "Of course you do not know, your highness, that the prime criterion of true femininity in *Zokk* is the ability to cook."

"Well, sweetheart," I said, "what are we waiting for?"

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What if the South had won the Civil War? It is universally agreed that no other single event would have so altered the course of Western history as a Confederate victory in that bloody conflict. (Our two great political parties are now engaged in their quadrennial campaign for the Presidency; many of the ideas and issues they argue so vehemently — and argued even more fiercely in their July conventions — are a direct result of the Union victory of some 90 years ago!) The problem has been debated before, especially by the Honorable Winston Churchill, but we think never so fully, with such cogent logic as Ward Moore displays in his brilliant conception of a beaten USA dwindling to a little, rundown, backward country while the triumphant CSA marches to world supremacy. As any creator of an alternate universe must, Mr. Moore (whose GREENER THAN YOU THINK, *Sloane, 1947, has become a classic of satiric science fiction) pays strict attention to background detail and creates a most plausible, if unhappy, world of tinugraphs, minibiles, Whigs, Populists and the great Emperors' War of 1914. It is a world that might have been but never was . . . because no man can foresee his own past.*

Bring the Jubilee

by WARD MOORE

ALTHOUGH I am writing this in the year 1877, I was not born until 1921. Neither the dates nor the tenses are error — let me explain:

I was born, as I say, in 1921, but it was not until the early 1930's, when I was about ten, that I began to understand what a peculiarly frustrate and disinherited world was about me. Perhaps my approach to realization was through the crayon portrait of Granpa Hodgins which hung, very solemnly, over the mantel.

Granpa Hodgins after whom I was named, perhaps a little grandiloquently, Hodgins McCormick Backmaker, had been a veteran of the War of Southron Independence. Like so many young men he had put on a shapeless blue uniform in response to the call of the ill-advised and headstrong — or martyred — Mr. Lincoln. Depending on which of my lives' viewpoint you take.

Granpa lost an arm on the Great Retreat to Philadelphia after the fall of

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Washington to General Lee's victorious Army of Northern Virginia, so his war ended some six months before the capitulation at Reading and the acknowledgment of the independence of the Confederate States on July 4, 1864. One-armed and embittered, Granpa came home to Wappinger Falls and, like his fellow veterans, tried to remake his life in a different and increasingly hopeless world.

On its face the Peace of Richmond was a just and even generous disposition of a defeated foe by the victor. (Both sides — for different reasons — remembered the mutiny of the Unreconstructed Federals of the Armies of the Cumberland and the Tennessee who, despite defeat at Chattanooga, could not forget Vicksburg and Port Hudson and fought bloodily against the order to surrender.) The South could easily have carved the country up to suit its most fiery patriots, even to the point of detaching the West as a satellite protectorate. Instead the chivalrous Southrons contented themselves with drawing the new boundary along more or less traditional lines. The Mason-Dixon gave them Delaware and Maryland, but they generously returned the panhandle of western Virginia jutting above it. Missouri was naturally included in the Confederacy, but of the disputed territory Colorado and Deseret were conceded to the old Union; only Kansas and California as well as — for obvious defensive reasons — Nevada's tip went to the South.

But the Peace of Richmond had also laid the cost of the war on the beaten North and this was what crippled Granpa Hodgins more than the loss of his arm. The postwar inflation entered the galloping stage during the Vallandigham Administration, became dizzying in the time of President Seymour and precipitated the food riots of 1873 and '74. It was only after the election of President Butler by the Whigs in 1876 and the reorganization and drastic deflation following that money and property became stable, but by this time all normal values were destroyed. Meanwhile the indemnities had to be paid regularly in gold. Granpa and hundreds of thousands like him just never seemed to get back on their feet.

How well I remember, as a small boy in the 1920's and '30's, my mother and father talking bitterly of how the War had ruined everything. They were not speaking of the then fairly recent Emperors' War of 1914–16, but of the War of Southron Independence which still, nearly 70 years later, blighted what was left of the United States. I heard of the strange, bright era when we and our neighbors had owned our own farms outright and had not had to pay rent for them to the banks or half the crop to a landlord. I learned of the bygone time when a man could nearly always get a job for wages which would support himself and a family, before the system of indenture became so common that practically the only alternative to pauper-

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ism was to sell oneself to a company. In those days men and women married young and had large families; there might have been five generations between Granpa Hodgins and myself instead of three. And many uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters. Now late marriages with but a single child were the rule.

If it hadn't been for the War — was the basic theme stated with variations suited to the particular circumstance. If it hadn't been for the War the most energetic young men and women would not turn to emigration; foreigners would not visit the United States with condescending contempt; the great powers would think twice before sending troops to "restore order" every time one of their citizens was molested and our own inadequate police forces were unable to protect him. If it hadn't been for the War it would be possible to live like a self respecting human being, to work reasonable hours for wages that would buy decent food and clothing instead of shoddy.

Perhaps because of the ever increasing hostility to immigrants which culminated in the virtual barring of the country to all, little mention was ever made of Grandfather Backmaker. No enlarged crayon portrait of him hung anywhere, much less over the mantel. Somehow I got the impression my father's father had been not only a foreigner by birth, but a shady character in his own right, a man who actually believed in the things for which Granpa Hodgins had fought. I don't know how I learned that Grandfather Backmaker had made speeches advocating equal rights for Negroes or protesting the mass lynchings so popular in the North, in contrast to the humane treatment accorded these non-citizens in the Confederacy. Nor do I remember how I found out he had been run out of several places before finally settling in Wappinger Falls or that all his life people had muttered darkly at his back, "Dirty Abolitionist!" — a very deep imprecation indeed. I only know that as a consequence of this taint my father, a meek, hard-working, worried little man, was completely dominated by my mother who never let him forget that a Hodgins or a McCormick was worth dozens of Backmakers.

I must have been a great trial to her for I showed no signs of proper Hodgins gumption, such as she had a right to expect in her only child. For one thing I was remarkably unhandy and awkward; of little use in the hundred necessary chores around our dilapidated house. I could not pick up a hammer at her command to do something about fixing the loose weatherboards on the east side without mashing my thumb or splitting the aged, unpainted wood. I could not hoe the kitchen garden without damaging precious vegetables and leaving weeds intact. I could shovel snow in the winter at a tremendous rate for I was strong and had endurance, but work

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requiring manual dexterity baffled me. I fumbled in harnessing Bessie, our mare, or hitching her to the cart for my father's trips to Poughkeepsie, and as for helping him on the farm or in his smithy — from which most of our meager cash income came — I'm afraid my efforts drove that mild man nearest to a temper he ever experienced. He would lay the reins on the plow-horse's back or his hammer down on the anvil and say mournfully,

"Better see if you can help your mother, Hodge. You're only in my way here."

I remember the time a trackless locomotive — minibiles, they were called — broke down not a quarter of a mile from Father's smithy. This was a golden, unparalleled, unbelievable opportunity. Minibiles, like any other luxury, were rare in the United States though they were common enough in prosperous countries like the German Union or the Confederacy. We had to rely for our transportation on the never-failing horse or on the railroads, wornout and broken down as they were. For decades the great issue in Congress was the never completed Pacific transcontinental line, though Canada had one and the Confederate States seven. (Though sailing balloons were in frequent use they were still looked upon as somehow "impractical.") Only a rare millionaire with connections in Berlin, Washington-Baltimore or Leesburg could afford the indulgence of the costly and complicated minibile which required a trained driver in order to bounce over the rutted and chuckholed roads. Only one of an extraordinarily adventurous spirit would leave the tar surfaced streets of New York or its sister city of Brooklyn, where the solid rubber tires of the minibiles could at worst find traction on the horse or cable-car rails, for the morasses or washboard roads which were the only highways north of the Harlem River.

When such a one did it was inevitable that the jolting, jouncing and shaking it received would break or disconnect one of the delicate parts in its complex mechanism. Then the only recourse — apart from telegraphing back to the city if the traveler were fortunate enough to break down near an instrument — was to the closest blacksmith. Smiths rarely knew much of the principles of the minibiles, but with the broken part before them they could fabricate a passable duplicate and, unless the machine had suffered serious damage, put it back in place. It was customary for such a craftsman to compensate himself for the time taken away from horse-shoeing or spring-fitting (or just absently chewing on an oatstraw) by demanding exhorbitant remuneration, amounting to perhaps 25 or 30 cents an hour, thus revenging his rural poverty and self-sufficiency upon the effete wealth and helplessness of the urban excursionist.

Such a golden opportunity befell my father, as I said, during the fall of

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1933 when I was twelve years old. The driver had made his way to the smithy, leaving the owner of the minibile marooned and fuming in the enclosed passenger seat. A hasty visit convinced Father — who could repair a clock or broken rake with equal dexterity — that his only course was to bring the machine to the forge since a part, not easy to disassemble, had been bent and needed heating and straightening. (The driver, the owner, and Father all repeated the name of the part often enough, but so inept have I been with "practical" things all my life that I couldn't recall it ten minutes later, much less after more than 30 years.)

"Hodge," he said, "run and get the mare and ride over to Jones's. Don't try to saddle her — go bareback. Ask Mr. Jones to kindly lend me his team."

"I'll give the boy a quarter dollar for himself if he's back with the team within twenty minutes," added the owner of the minibile, sticking his head out of the window.

I won't say I was off like the wind, for my life's work has given me a distaste for exaggeration or hyperbole, but I moved faster than I ever had before. A quarter, a whole shining silver quarter, a day's full wage for a boy, half the day's pay of a grown man — all for myself, to spend as I wished.

I ran all the way to the barn, led Bessie out by her halter and jumped on her broad back, my enthralling daydream growing and deepening each moment. With my quarter safely got I could perhaps persuade my father to take me along on his next trip to Poughkeepsie; in the shops there I could find some yards of figured cotton for Mother, or a box of cigars to which Father was partial but rarely bought for himself, or an unimagined something for Mary McCutcheon, temporarily the acme of feminine charm to me.

Or I could take the entire quarter into Newman's Book and Stationery Store. Here I could not afford to buy one of the latest English or Confederate books — even the novels I disdained cost 50 cents in their original and 30 in the pirated United States' edition — but what treasures there were in the twelve and a half cent reprints and the dime classics!

With Bessie's legs moving steadily beneath me I pored over in my imagination Mr. Newman's entire stock. Now, my quarter would buy two reprints, but I would read them in as many evenings and be no better off than before until their memory faded and I could read them again. Better to invest in paperbacked adventure stories giving sharp, breathless pictures of life in the West or rekindling the glories of the War. True, they were written almost entirely by Confederate authors and I was, thanks perhaps to the portrait of Granpa Hodgins and my mother's hard patriotism, a devout partisan of the lost cause of Sheridan and Sherman and Thomas. But patriotism could not steel me against the excitement of the Confederate

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paperbacks; literature simply disregarded the boundary stretching to the Pacific.

I had finally determined to invest all my 25 cents, not in five paperbound volumes but in ten of the same in secondhand or shopworn condition, when I suddenly became aware I had been riding Bessie for some considerable time. I looked around, rather dazed by the abrupt translation from the dark and slightly musty interior of Newman's bookstore to the bright countryside, to find with dismay that Bessie hadn't taken me to the Jones farm after all but on some private tour of her own in the opposite direction.

I'm afraid this little anecdote is pointless (it was momentarily pointed enough for me that particular evening, for in addition to the loss of the promised quarter I received a thorough whacking with a willow switch from my mother after my father had, as usual, dolefully refused his parental duty) except that it shows that in pursuing the dream I could lose the reality.

My feeling that books were a part of life, and the most important part, was no passing phase. Other boys in their early teens dreamed of going to Dakotah, indenting to a company run by a young and beautiful woman (this was a favorite theme of many of the paperbacks), discovering the loot hidden by a gang, or emigrating to Australia or the South African Republic. Or else they faced the reality of carrying on the family farm, petty trade, or indenture. I only wanted to be allowed to read.

The school at Wappinger Falls taught as little as possible as quickly as possible; parents needed the help of their children to survive or to build up a small reserve in the illusory hope of buying free of their indenture. Both my mother and my teachers looked askance at my desire to persist in my studies past an age when my contemporaries were making themselves economically useful.

Nor — even supposing I had the fees — could the Academy at Poughkeepsie provide me with what I wanted. There was no money for Yale, Harvard or Columbia, those increasingly decayed and provincialized colleges which contrasted so painfully with the great and flourishing universities of the Confederacy or Europe. Indeed our financial position was very bad and there was often talk of my father selling the smithy and indenting.

I was of no help; rather I was one who ate three meals a day and occupied a bed. Yet when I spoke of trying to get more learning my mother went into a perfect fury at the very mention of such idleness and self indulgence. My father merely shrugged resignedly. Only Agnes Jones who had supplanted Mary McCutcheon sympathized and encouraged me. Unhappily, her plans for my future were limited to marrying her and helping her father on his farm, which didn't seem to me any great advance over what I had to look forward to at home.

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I was increasingly conscious too of the looks and smiles which followed me. A great lout of seventeen, too lazy to do a stroke of work, always wandering around with his head in the clouds or lying with his nose stuck in a book. Too bad — and the Backmakers such hardworking folks too. Wappinger Falls was intolerable.

A few months before my eighteenth birthday then, I packed my three most cherished books in my good white cotton shirt, and having bade a most romantic goodbye to Agnes (which certainly would have eventuated in the consummation of all her hopes had her father discovered us), I set out on foot for New York.

II

New York, in 1938, had a population of nearly a million, having grown gradually but steadily since the close of the War of Southron Independence. Together with the half million in the city of Brooklyn this represented by far the greatest concentration of people in the United States, though of course it could not compare with the great Confederate centers of Washington (now including Baltimore and Alexandria), St. Louis, or Leesburg (once Mexico City).

The country boy who had never seen anything more metropolitan than Poughkeepsie was tremendously impressed. Cable-cars whizzed northward as far as 59th street on the west side and all the way to 87th on the east, while horse-cars furnished convenient crosstown transportation with a line every few blocks. Bicycles, rare around Wappinger Falls, were thick as flies, darting ahead and alongside drayhorses pulling wallowing vans, carts and wagons. Prancing trotters drew private carriages, buggies, broughams, victorias, hansoms, dogcarts or sulkies; neither the cyclists, coachmen nor horses seemed overawed or discommoded by occasional minibiles chuffing their way swiftly and implacably over cobblestones or asphalt.

Incredibly intricate traceries of telegraph wires swarmed overhead, crossing and recrossing at all angles, slanting upward into offices and flats or downward into stores, a reminder that no family with pretensions to gentility would be without the clacking instrument in the parlor and every child learned the Morse code before he could read. Thousands of sparrows considered the wires properly their own; they perched and swung, quarrelled and scolded on them, leaving only to satisfy their voracity upon the steaming mounds of horsedung below.

Buildings of eight or ten storeys were common, and there were many of fourteen or fifteen, serviced by pneumatic English lifts, that same marvelous invention which permitted the erection of veritable skyscrapers in Wash-

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ington and Leesburg. Above them balloons moved gracefully through the air, guided and controlled as skillfully as an old time sailing vessel.

Most exciting of all was simply the number of people who walked, rode, or merely stood around on the streets. It seemed hardly believable that so many humans could crowd themselves so closely. Beggars pleaded, touts wheedled, peddlers hawked, newsboys shouted, bootblacks chanted. Messengers pushed their way, loafers yawned, ladies stared, drunks staggered. For long moments I paused, standing stock still, not thinking of going anywhere, merely watching the spectacle.

I had hardly begun to fondle the sharp edge of wonder when darkness fell and the gas lamps, lit simultaneously by telegraphic sparks, glowed and shone on nearly every corner. Whatever had been drab and dingy in daylight — and even my eyes had not been blind to the signs of dirt and decay — became in an instant magically enchanting, softened and shadowed into mysterious beauty. I breathed the dusty air with a relish I had never felt for that of the country and knew myself for the first time to be spiritually at home.

But spiritual sustenance is not quite enough for an eighteen year old; I began to feel the need for food and rest. The three dollars in my pocket I was resolved to hoard, not having any notion how to go about replenishing it. I could not do without eating, however, so I stopped in at the first gaslit bakery, buying a penny loaf, and walked slowly through the entrancing streets, munching on it.

Now the fronts of the tinugraph lyceums were lit up by porters with long tapers, so that they glowed yellow and inviting, each heralded with a boldly lettered broadside or dashingly drawn cartoon advertising the amusement to be found within. I was sorely tempted to see for myself this magical entertainment of pictures taken so close together they gave the illusion of motion, but the lowest price of admission was five cents. Some of the more garish theaters, which specialized in the incredible phonotos — tinugraphs which were ingeniously combined with a sound-producing machine operated by compressed air, so that the pictures seemed not only to move, but to talk — actually charged ten or even fifteen cents for an hour's spectacle.

By now I ached with tiredness; the insignificant bundle of shirt and books had become a burden. I was pressed by the question of where to sleep, but I didn't connect the glass transparencies behind which gaslight shone through the unpainted letters of BEDS, ROOMS, or HOTEL with my need, for I was looking for the urban version of the inn at Wappinger Falls or the Poughkeepsie Commercial House. I became more and more confused as fatigue blurred impressions of still newer marvels, so that I am not entirely sure whether it was merely one or a succession of enchanting girls

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who offered delights for a quarter. I know I was solicited by crimps for the Confederate Legion who operated openly in defiance of the laws of the United States and that an incredible number of beggars accosted me.

At last I thought of asking directions from one of the multitude on the wooden or granite sidewalks. But without realizing it I had wandered from the thronged, brightly lit avenues into an unpeopled, darkened area where buildings were low and frowning, where the flicker of a candle or the yellow of a kerosene lamp in windows far apart were unrivalled by any streetlights.

My ears had been deafened all day by the clop of hooves, the rattling of iron tires or the puffing of minibiles; now the empty street seemed unnaturally still. The suddenly looming figure of another walker was the luckiest of chances.

"Excuse me, friend," I said. "Can you tell me where's the nearest inn, or anywhere I can get a bed for the night cheap?"

I felt him peering at me. "Rube, huh? Much money you got?"

"Th— Not very much. That's why I want to find cheap lodging."

"OK, Reuben — come along."

"Oh, don't trouble to show me. Just give me an idea how to get there."

He grunted. "No trouble, Reuben. No trouble at all."

Taking my arm just above the elbow in a firm grip he steered me along. For the first time I began to feel alarm. However, before I could even attempt to shrug free, he had shoved me into the mouth of an alley discernible only because its absolute blackness contrasted with the relative darkness of the street.

"Wait —" I began.

"In here, Reuben. Soundest night's sleep you've had in a long time. And cheap — it's free."

I started to break loose and was surprised to find he no longer held me. Before I could even begin to think, however, a terrific blow fell on the right side of my head and I traded the blackness of the alley for the blackness of insensibility.

I was recalled to consciousness by a smell. More accurately a cacophony of smells. I opened my eyes and shut them against the unbearable pain of light; I groaned at the equally unbearable pain in my skull bones. Feverishly and against my will I tried to identify the walloping odors around me.

The stink of death and rottenness was thick. I knew there was an outhouse — many outhouses — nearby. The ground I lay upon was damp with the water of endless dishwashings and launderings. The noisomeness of offal suggested that the garbage of many families had never been buried, but left to rot in the alley or near it. In addition there was the smell of death — not

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the sweetish effluvium of blood, such as any country boy who has helped butcher a bull-calf or hog knows — but the unmistakable stench of corrupt, maggotty flesh. Besides all this there was the spoor of humanity.

A new discomfort at last forced my eyes open for the second time. A hard surface was pressing painful knobs into my exposed skin. I looked and felt around me.

The knobs were the cobbles of a fetid alley; not a foot away was the cadavar of a dog, thoroughly putrescent; beyond him a drunk retched and groaned. A trickle of liquid swill wound its way delicately between the stones. My coat, shirt, and shoes were gone; so was the bundle with my books. There was no use searching my pocket for the three dollars — I knew I was lucky the robber left me my pants and my life.

A middleaged man — at least he looked middleaged to my youthful eye — regarded me speculatively over the head of the drunk. "Pretty well cleaned yuh out, huh, boy?"

I nodded — and then was sorry for the motion.

"Reward of virtue. Assuming you was virtuous, which I assume. Come to the same end as me, stinking drunk. Only I still got my shirt. Couldn't hock it no matter how thirsty I got."

I groaned.

"Where yuh from boy? What rural — see, sober now — precincts miss you?"

"Wappinger Falls, near Poughkeepsie. My name's Hodge Backmaker."

"Well now, that's friendly of you, Hodge. Me, I'm George Pondible. Periodic. Just tapering off."

I hadn't an idea what Pondible was talking about. Trying to understand made my head worse.

"Took everything, I suppose? Haven't a nickel left to help a hangover?"

"My head," I mumbled, quite superfluously.

He staggered to his feet. "Best thing — souse it in the river. Take more to fix mine."

"But . . . can I go through the streets like this?"

"Right," he said. "Quite right."

He stooped down and put one hand beneath the drunk. With the other he removed the jacket, a maneuver betraying practice, for it elicited no protest from the victim. He then performed the still more delicate operation of depriving him of his shirt and shoes, tossing them all to me. They were a loathsome collection of rags not fit to clean a manure-spreader. The jacket was torn and greasy, the pockets hanging like the ears of a dog; the shirt was a filthy tatter, the shoes shapeless fragments of leather with great gapes in the soles.

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"It's stealing," I protested.

"Right. Put them on and let's get out of here."

The short walk to the river was through streets lacking the glamour of those of the day before. The tenements were smokestreaked, marked with steps between the parting bricks where mortar had fallen out; great hunks of wall were kept in place only by the support of equally crazy ones abutting. The wretched rags I wore were better suited to this neighborhood than Pondible's, though his would have marked him tramp and vagrant in Wappinger Falls.

The Hudson too was soiled, with an oily scum and debris, so that I hesitated even to dip the purloined shirt, much less my aching head. But urged on by Pondible I climbed down the slimy stones between two docks and pushing the flotsam aside, ducked myself in the unappetizing water.

The sun was hot and the shirt dried on my back as we walked away from the river, the jacket over my arm. Yesterday I had entertained vague plans of presenting myself at Columbia College, begging to exchange work of any kind for tuition. In my present state this was manifestly impossible; for a moment I wished I had waded further into the Hudson and drowned.

"Fixes your head," said Pondible with more assurance than accuracy. "Now for mine."

Now that my mind was clearer my despair grew by the minute. Admitting my plans had been impractical and tenuous, they were yet plans of a kind, something in which I could put — or force — my hopes. Now they were gone, literally knocked out of existence and I had nothing to look forward to, nothing on which to exert my energies and dreams. To go back to Wappinger Falls was out of the question, not simply to dodge the bitterness of admitting defeat so quickly, but because I knew myself to be completely useless to my parents. Yet I had nothing to expect in the city except starvation or a life of petty crime.

Pondible guided me into a saloon, a dark place, gaslit even this early, with a steam piano tinkling away the popular tune, *Mormon Girl:*

> There's a girl in the State of Deseret
> Whom I love and I'm trying to for-get.
> Forget her for tired feet's sake
> Don't wanna walk miles to Great Salt Lake.
> They ever build that railroad toooo the ocean
> I'd return my darling Mormon girl's devotion.
> But the tracks stop short in Ioway . . .

I couldn't remember the last line.

"Shot," Pondible ordered the bartender, "and buttermilk for my chum."

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The bartender kept on polishing the wood in front of him with a wet, dirty rag. "Got any jack?"

"Pay you tomorrow, friend."

The bartender's uninterrupted industry said clearly, then drink tomorrow.

"Listen," argued Pondible; "I'm tapering off. You know me. I've spent plenty of money here."

The bartender shrugged. "Why don't you indent?"

Pondible looked shocked. "At my age? What would a company pay for a wornout old carcass? A hundred dollars maybe. Then a release in a couple of years with a med holdback so I'd have to report every week somewhere. No friend, I've come through this long a free man (in a manner of speaking) and I'll stick it out. Let's have that shot; you can see for yourself I'm tapering off. You'll get your jack tomorrow."

I could see the bartender was weakening; each refusal was less surly and at last, to my astonishment, he set out a glass and bottle for Pondible and an earthenware mug of buttermilk for me. To my astonishment, I say, for credit was rarely extended on either large or small scale. The Inflation, though 60 years in the past, had left indelible impressions; people paid cash or did without. Debt was disgraceful; the notion things could be paid for while, or even after, they were being used was as unthinkable as was the idea of circulation of paper money instead of silver or gold.

I drank my buttermilk slowly, gratefully aware Pondible had ordered the most filling and sustaining liquid in the saloon. For all his unprepossessing appearance and peculiar moral notions, it was evident my new acquaintance had a rude wisdom as well as a rude kindliness.

He swallowed his whiskey in an instant and called upon the bartender for a quart pot of small beer which he now sippped, turning to me and drawing out, not unskillfully, the story not only of my life, but of my hopes, and the despondency I now knew at their shattering.

"Well," he said at last; "you can always take the advice our friend here offered me and indent. A young healthy lad like you could get yourself $1,000 or $1,200 —"

"Yes. And be a slave the rest of my life."

Pondible wiped specks of froth from his beard with the back of his hand. "Oh, indenting ain't slavery — it's better. And worse. For one thing the company that buys you won't hold you after you aren't worth your keep. They cancel your indenture without a cent in payment. Of course they'll take a med holdback so as to get a dollar or two for your corpse, but that's a long time away for you."

"Yes. A long time away. So I wouldn't be a slave for life; just 30 or 40 years. Till I wasn't any good to anyone, including myself."

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He seemed to be enjoying himself as he drank his beer. "You're a gloomy gus, Hodge. Tain't as bad as that. Indenting's pretty strictly regulated. That's the idea, anyway. You can't be made to work over 60 hours a week — ten hours a day. With $1,000 or $1,200 you could get all the education you want in your spare time and then turn your learning to account by making enough money to buy yourself free."

I tried to think about it dispassionately, though goodness knows I'd been over the ground often enough. It was true that the amount, a not inconceivable one for a boy willing to indent himself, would see me comfortably through college. But Pondible's notion that I could turn my "learning to account" I knew to be a fantasy despite its currency. Perhaps in the Confederate States or the German Union knowledge was rewarded with wealth, or at least a comfortable living, but any study I pursued — I knew my own "impracticality" well enough by now — was bound to yield few material benefits in the poor, exploited, backward United States, which existed as a nation at all only on the sufferance and unresolved rivalries of the great powers. I would be lucky to struggle through school and eke out some kind of living as a freeman; I could never hope to earn enough to buy back my indenture on what was left of my time after subtracting 60 hours a week.

Pondible listened as I explained all this, nodding and sipping alternately. "Well then," he said, "there's the gangs."

I looked my horror.

He laughed. "Forget your country rearing. If you leave the parsons' sermons out of it there's no difference joining the gangs than joining the army — if we had one — or the Confederate Legion. Most of the gangsters never even get shot at. They all live high, high as anybody in the 26 states, and every once in a while there's a dividend that's more than a workingman earns in a lifetime."

I began to be sure my benefactor was a gangster. And yet . . . if this were so why had he wheedled credit from the barkeep? Was it simply an elaborate blind to recruit me? It seemed hardly worth it. "A fat dividend maybe. Or a rope."

"Most of the gangsters die of old age. Or competition. Ain't one been hung I can think of in the last five years. But I can see you've no stomach for it. Tell me Hodge — you a Whig or Populist?"

The sudden change of subject bewildered me. "Why . . . Populist, I guess. Anyway I don't think much of the Whigs' 'Property, Protection, Permanent Population'. The anxiety to build up a prosperous employing class artificially ever since the original industrialists were wiped out by the reparations and inflation is one of the things which has kept the country so

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poor. The rest is nonsense; they've never attempted to try protection when they were in power for the very good reason that the Confederacy and the German Union won't allow any small nation to put up a tariff wall against their exports. As for 'permanent population', it's unaffected by elections. Those who can't make a living will continue to emigrate to more prosperous countries where they can —"

My voice trailed off. Pondible cocked an eyebrow over his beer mug, put it down and chewed on a soggy corner of his mustache, still regarding me quizzically.

"I don't feel like leaving the United States," I muttered defensively.

"You heard of the Grand Army?" he asked with apparent irrelevance.

"Who hasn't? Not much difference between them and the regular gangs."

"I dunno, Hodge. Seems to me they got much the same ideas you have. They're Populists. They don't like the United States being a fifth rate country; they're against indenting; they think prosperity's got to come from the poor upward, not from the rich downward. Maybe they get a little rough with Whigs or Confederate agents once in a while, but you can't make bacon out of a live hog."

Was it the thought of Grandfather Backmaker that made me ask, "And do they want to give Negroes equality?"

He drew back sharply. "Touch of the tarbrush in you, boy? No, I can see you ain't. You just don't understand. We might have won that war if it hadn't been for the Abolitionists. They're better off among their own. Better leave those ideas alone Hodge; there's enough to be done for our own. Chase the foreigners out; teach their agents a lesson; build up the country again."

"Are you trying to recruit me for the Grand Army?"

Pondible finished his beer. "No. I want to get you somewheres to sleep, three meals a day, and that education you're so anxious for. Come along."

III

He took me to a bookseller's and stationery store on Astor Place with a printshop in the basement and the man to whom he introduced me was the owner, Roger Tyss. I spent almost six years there, and when I left neither the store nor its contents nor Tyss himself seemed to have changed or aged. I know books were sold and others bought to take their places on the shelves or be piled towerwise on the floor; I helped cart in many rolls of sulphide paper and bottles of printers' ink, and delivered many bundles of damp pamphlets, broadsides, letterheads and envelopes. Inked ribbons for typewriting machines, penpoints, ledgers and daybooks; rulers, paperclips, legal

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forms and cubes of indiarubber came and went. Yet the identical disorder, the same dogeared volumes, the indistinguishable stock, the unaltered cases of type remained fixed for six years, all covered by the same film of dust which responded to vigorous sweeping only by rising into the air, filling it with the sneezes of the sweeper or any customers happening to be present and immediately settling back on the precise spots.

Roger Tyss grew six years older and I can only charge it to the heedless eye of youth that I discerned no signs of that aging or that I was never able to guess his years to my satisfaction. Like Pondible and — as I learned — so many members of the Grand Army, he wore a beard. His was closely trimmed, wiry and grizzled. Above the beard and across his forehead were many fine lines which always held some of the grime of the store or printing press. One did not dwell long on either beard or wrinkles, however; what held you were his eyes: large, dark, fierce and compassionate. Anyone might have dismissed him at first glance as simply an undersized, stoopshouldered, slovenly printer had one not been fixed by those compelling eyes.

For six years that store was home and school, and Roger Tyss was employer, teacher and father to me. I was not indentured to him, nor did he pay me any wages. Our agreement — if so simple and unilateral a statement can be called an agreement — was made ten minutes after he met me for the first time.

"Hodgins," he said, staring piercingly up at me (he never then nor later condescended to the familiar "Hodge" nor did I ever address or even think of him but as Mr. Tyss), "I'll feed you and lodge you, teach you to set type and give you the run of the books. I'll pay you no money; you can steal from me if you have the conscience. You can learn as much here in four months as in a college in four years — or you can learn nothing. I'll expect you to do the work I think needs doing; any time you don't like it you're free to go."

He was my father and teacher, but he was never my friend. Rather he was my adversary. I respected him and the longer I knew him the deeper became my respect, but it was an ambivalent feeling and attached only to his zealotry. I detested his ideas, his philosophy and some of his actions; and this detestation grew until I was no longer able to live near him. But I am getting ahead of my story.

Tyss knew books, not only as a bookman knows them — binding, size, edition, value — but as a scholar. He seemed to have read enormously and on every conceivable subject, many of them quite useless in practical application. As a printer he followed the same pattern; he was not concerned solely with setting up a neat page; he wrote much on his own account: poetry, essays, manifestoes, composing directly from the font, running off a

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proof which he read and immediately destroyed before pying the type. I slept on a mattress kept under one of the counters during the day; Tyss had a couch, hardly more luxurious, downstairs by the flatbed press. Each morning before it was time to open, Tyss sent me across town on the horse-cars to the Washington Market to buy six pounds of beef — twelve on Saturdays, for the market, unlike the bookstore, was closed Sundays. It was always the same cut, heart of ox or cow, dressed by the butcher in thin strips. Several times, after I had been with him long enough to tire of the fare, but not long enough to realize the obstinacy of his nature, I begged him to let me substitute pork or mutton, or at least some other part of the beef, like brains or tripe which were even cheaper. But he always answered, "The heart, Hodgins; purchase the heart. It is the vital food."

While I was on my errand he would buy three loaves of yesterday's bread, still tolerably fresh; when I returned he took a long two-pronged fork, our only utensil, for the establishment was innocent of other cutlery or dishes, and spearing a strip of heart held it over the gas flame until it was sooted and toasted rather than broiled. We tore the loaves with our fingers and with a hunk of bread in one hand and a piece of meat in the other we each ate a pound of beef and half a loaf of bread for breakfast, dinner, and supper.

Tyss expected me to work but he was not a hard nor inconsiderate master. In 1938–44, when the country was being ground deeper into colonialism by the Confederate States and the German Union, there were few employers so lenient. I read much, practically when I pleased, and he encouraged me; even going to the length, when a particular book was not to be found in his considerable stock, of letting me get it of one of his competitors, to be written up against his account.

Nor was he too scrupulous about the time I took on his errands; if I spent some of it with a girl — and there were many girls in New York who didn't look too unkindly on a tall youth even though he still carried some of the rustic air of Wappinger Falls — he never mentioned that a walk of half a mile had taken me a couple of hours.

It was true he kept rigidly to his original promise never to pay me wages, but he often handed me coins for pocket money — evidently satisfied I wasn't stealing — and he replaced my makeshift wardrobe with worn but decent clothing.

He hadn't exaggerated the possibilities of the books which now surrounded me. His brief warning, "— or you can learn nothing," was lost on me. I suppose someone of different temperament might have been surfeited with paper and print; I can only say I wasn't. I nibbled, tasted, gobbled books. After the store was shut I hooked a student lamp to the nearest gas jet by

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means of a long tube, and lying on my pallet, with a dozen volumes handy, I read till I was no longer able to keep my eyes open or understand the words. Often I woke in the morning to find the light still burning and my fingers holding the pages open.

It seemed to me Tyss must have read everything, mastered every subject, acquired all languages; even now I believe his knowledge to have been incredibly wide. When he came upon me with an open book he would glance at the running title over my shoulder and begin talking, either of the particular work or its topic. What he had to say often gave me an insight I would otherwise have missed, and turned me to other writers, other aspects. He respected no authority simply because it was acclaimed or established; he prodded me to examine every statement, every hypothesis no matter how commonly accepted.

Early in my employment I was attracted to a large framed parchment he kept hanging over his typecase. It was simply but beautifully printed; I knew without being told that he had set it himself:

THE BODY OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PRINTER
LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK
STRIPPED OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING
LIES HERE
FOOD FOR WORMS.
BUT THE WORK SHALL NOT BE LOST
FOR IT WILL, AS HE BELIEVED,
COME FORTH AGAIN
IN A NEW AND BETTER EDITION
REVISED & CORRECTED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

When he caught me admiring it Tyss laughed. "Elegant, isn't it, Hodgins? But a lie, a perverse and probably hyocritical lie. There is no Author; the book of life is simply a mess of pied type — a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. There is no plan, no synopsis to be filled in with pious hopes or hypocritical actions. There is nothing but a vast emptiness in the universe."

I had been reading an obscure Irish theologian — a Protestant curate of some forsaken parish, so ill-esteemed that he had been forced to publish his sermons himself — named George B. Shaw, and I had been impressed by

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his forceful style if not his philosophy. I quoted him to Tyss, perhaps as much to show erudition as to counter his argument.

"Nonsense," said my employer, "I've seen the good parson's book, and it's a waste of good ink and paper. Man does not think; he only thinks he thinks. An automaton, he responds to external stimuli; he cannot order his thought."

"You mean then that there is no free will — not even a marginal minimum of choice?"

"Exactly. The whole thing is an illusion. We do what we do because someone else has done what he did; he did it because still another someone did what he did. Every action is the rigid result of another action."

"But there must have been a beginning," I objected. "And if there was a beginning, choice existed if only for that split second. And if choice exists once it can exist again."

"You have the makings of a metaphysician, Hodgins," he said contemptuously, for metaphysics was one of the most despised words in his vocabulary. "The objection is childish. Answering you and the Reverend Shaw on your own level, I could say that time is an illusion and that all events occur simultaneously. Or if I grant its existence I can ask, What makes you think time is a simple straight line running flatly through eternity? Why do you assume that time isn't curved? Can you conceive of its end? Can you really assume its beginning? Of course not — then why aren't both the same? The serpent with its tail in its mouth?"

"You mean we not only play a prepared script but repeat the identical lines over and over and over for infinity? There's no heaven in your cosmos, only an unimaginable, never ending hell."

He shrugged his shoulders. "That you should spout emotional theology at me is part of what you call the script, Hodgins. You didn't select the words nor speak them voluntarily. They were called into existence by what I said, which in turn was mere response to what went before."

Weakly I was forced back to a more elementary attack. "You don't act in accordance with your own conviction."

He snorted.

"A thoughtless remark, excusable only because automatic. How could I act differently? Like you, I am a prisoner of stimuli."

"How pointless to risk ruin and imprisonment as a member of the Grand Army when you can't change what's predestined."

"I can no more help engaging myself in the underground than I can help breathing, or my heart beating, or dying when the time comes. Nothing, they say, is certain but death and taxes; actually everything is certain. Everything. . . ."

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Tyss never tried to conceal the extent of his activity in the Grand Army any more than he attempted to indoctrinate me with its principles. One illegal paper, the *True American*, came from his press and I often saw crumpled proofs of large-type warnings to "Get Out of Town you Conf. TRAITOR or the GA will HANG YOU!"

I knew that Pondible and the others who bore an indefinable resemblance whether bearded or not came to the store on Grand Army business, and I knew that many of the errands I was sent advanced, or were supposed to advance, the Grand Army's cause. Unwilling to face the moral issue of being, no matter how remotely, accessory to mayhem, kidnaping and murder, or the connected economic one of being unemployed, I simply refused to acknowledge I was aiding the underground organization, but looked upon my duties solely as concerned with the bookstore.

My distaste for the Grand Army bred in me no sympathy for the Whigs or for those who were generally considered to be their masters, the Confederates. My reading taught me conclusively that, contrary to the accepted view in the United States, the victors in the War of Southron Independence had been men of the highest probity, and the noblest among them was their second president. But I also knew that immediately after the Peace of Richmond, less dedicated individuals became increasingly powerful in the new nation. As Sir John Dahlberg remarked, "Power tends to corrupt."

From his first election in 1865 until his death ten years later, President Lee had been the prisoner of an increasingly headstrong and imperialistic congress. He had opposed the invasion and conquest of Mexico by the Confederacy which had been undertaken on the pretext of restoring order during the conflict between the emperor and the republicans. However, he had too profound a respect for the constitutional processes to continue this opposition in the face of joint resolutions by the Confederate Congress.

Lee remained a symbol, but as the generation which had fought for independence died, the ideals he symbolized faded. Negro emancipation, enacted largely because of the pressure of men like Lee, soon revealed itself as a device for obtaining the benefits of slavery without its obligations. The freedmen on both sides of the new border were without franchise, and indeed for all practical purpose, without civil rights. Yet while the old Union first restricted and then abolished immigration, the Confederacy encouraged it, making the immigrants subjects, like the Latin-Americans who made up so much of the Southron population after the Confederacy expanded southward, limiting full citizenship to posterity of residents in the Confederate States on July Fourth 1864.

My reading of history — and by this time I had found there was no other study holding the same steady attraction for me — together with my strong

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revulsion to Tyss's philosophy convinced me there had been a radical alteration in the direction of the world's progress during the past century. It seemed to me humanity had been heading for longer and longer stretches of peace, greater intelligence in dealing with its problems, more of the necessities and luxuries of life more evenly distributed. But with the War of Southron Independence the trend changed, not into immediate and obvious retrogression perhaps, but certainly away from the bright future which had seemed so assured in 1850.

Take the pervasive fear of imminent war which hung over the world, a fear which was interrupted only by the outbreak of the conflicts themselves — which ranged from skirmishes between civilized powers equipped with modern weapons of extermination and barbarians with nothing more lethal than a bow or a blowgun, to global belligerency. This fear hung, ever more lowering and insistent as it became increasingly predictable that the antagonists in the great clash would be the Confederacy and the German Union.

Both could date their impetus from 1864 when the North German Confederation beat the Danes. From then on the expansion of the two countries was parallel; while the Confederacy worked its way methodically toward Cape Horn and westward through the Pacific, the German Union absorbed the Balkans and made a close alliance with the suddenly rejuvenated Spanish Empire. In the Emperors' War of 1914–16 the Confederacy had the opportunity of stepping in and giving its rival a mortal blow, and the action would have been popular, for the majority of Southrons, like the inhabitants of the United States, were sympathetic to the cause of England, France and Russia. But for a variety of reasons the Confederacy stayed neutral, allowing the German Union to absorb Ukrainia, Poland and the Baltic States, northern Italy, western France and the Low Countries. The Confederacy took the reward of this course by annexing Alaska from Russia and attaching the crippled British Empire to its orbit in close alliance, so that the two great powers were fairly balanced. The attraction of even so minor a country as the United States not only meant much to either side, but almost surely meant the war itself would be fought on the territory of this new satellite.

Because of all this I realized the Grand Army was in a position to play a much more important part than any similar illegal organization in another country.

Just how it was using its opportunity was something of which I became only gradually aware.

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IV

Among customers to whom I frequently delivered parcels of books there was a Monsieur René Enfandin who lived on Eighth Street, not far from Fifth Avenue. M. Enfandin was Consul for the Republic of Haiti; the house he occupied was distinguished from its otherwise equally drab neighbors by a large red and blue escutcheon over the doorway. He did not, however, use the entire dwelling himself, reserving only the parlor floor for the office of the consulate and living quarters; the rest was let to other tenants.

He had an arrangement with Tyss whereby he turned back most of the books he bought for credit on others. I soon saw that if he hadn't, his library would shortly have dispossessed him; as it was, books covered all the space not taken by the essential paraphernalia of his office and bedroom with the exception of a bit of bare wall on which hung a large crucifix. He seemed always to have a volume in his large, dark brown hand, politely closed over his thumb, or open for eager sampling.

Enfandin was tall and strong-featured, notable in any company. In the United States where a black man was an irritating reminder of a disastrously lost war and Mr. Lincoln's ill-advised proclamation of emancipation, he was the permanent target of rowdy boys and adult hoodlums. Even the diplomatic immunity of his post was poor protection, for it was believed — not without justification — that Haiti, the only American republic south of the Mason-Dixon line to preserve its independence, was disrupting the official if sporadically executed United States policy of deporting Negroes to Africa by encouraging their emigration to its shores or — what was more annoying — assisting persecuted blacks to flee westward to the hospitality of the unconquered Indians of Dakotah and Montana.

Although I was somewhat shy of him at the first, I was drawn to him more and more. Nor was this entirely because he was as avid for reading as myself or because his excursions into learning were more systematic and disciplined. He had a quick and penetrating sympathy that was at times almost telepathic. Beginning with perfunctory interchanges when I delivered his books, our conversations grew longer and more friendly; soon he was advising me and I was learning from him with an eagerness I had never felt for Tyss's proffered erudition.

"History, but certainly, Hodge," he had no discernible accent but sometimes his English was uncolloquial, "it is a noble study. But what is history? How is it written? How is it read? Is it a dispassionate chronicle of events scientifically determined and set down? Or is it the transmutation of the ordinary to the celebrated?"

"It seems to me that the facts are primary and the interpretations secon-

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dary," I answered. "If we can find out the facts we can form our own opinions on them."

"Perhaps. Perhaps. But take what is for me the central fact of all history." He pointed sweepingly at the crucifix. "As a Catholic the facts are plain to me; I believe what is written in the Gospels to be literally true: that the Son of Man died for me on that cross. But what are the facts for a contemporary Roman statesman? That an obscure local agitator threatened the stability of an uneasy province and was promptly executed in the approved Roman fashion, as a warning to others. And for a contemporary fellow countryman? That no such person existed. You think these facts are mutually exclusive? Yet you know that no two people see exactly the same thing, too many honest witnesses have contradicted each other. Even the Gospels must be reconciled."

"You are saying that truth is relative."

"Am I? Then I shall have my tongue examined, or my head. Because I mean to say no such thing. Truth is absolute and for all time. But one man cannot envisage all of truth; the best he can do is see one aspect of it whole. That is why I say to you, be a skeptic, Hodge. Always be the skeptic."

"Ay?" I was finding the admonition a little difficult to harmonize with his previous confession of faith.

"For the believer skepticism is essential. How else is he to know false gods from true except by doubting both? One of the most pernicious of folk-sayings is, 'I cannot believe my eyes!' Why particularly should you believe your eyes? You were given eyes to see with, not to believe with. Believe your mind, your intuition, your reason, your emotion if you like — but not your eyes unaided by any of these interpreters. Your eyes can see the mirage, the hallucination, as easily as the actual scenery. Your eyes will tell you nothing exists but matter —"

"Not only my eyes but my boss." I told him of Tyss's mechanistic creed.

"God have mercy on his soul," muttered Enfandin. "Poor creature. He has liberated himself from the superstitions of religion in order to fall into superstition so abject no Christian can conceive it. Imagine it to yourself—" he began to pace the floor "— time is circular, man is automaton, we are doomed to repeat the identical gestures over and over, forever. Oh, I say to you, Hodge, this is monstrous."

I nodded. "Yes. But what is the answer? Limitless space, limitless time? They are almost as horrifying, because they are inconceivable."

"And why should the inconceivable be horrible? But you are right. This is not the answer. The answer is that all — time, space, matter —all is illusion. All but the good God. Nothing exists but Him. We are creatures of His fancy, figments of His imagination . . ."

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"Then where does free will come in?"

"As a gift, of course — how else? The greatest gift and the greatest responsibility."

I can't say I was entirely satisfied with Enfandin's exposition, though it was more to my taste than Tyss's. I returned to the conversation at intervals, both in my thoughts and when I saw him, but in the end all I really accepted was his original adjuration to be skeptical, which I doubt I always applied in the way he meant me to.

Frequently he became so interested in our talk, which ranged widely, for he thought it no frivolity to touch on any subject engaging either of us whether it might be considered trivial or not, that he walked back to the bookstore with me, leaving a note on the door of the consulate to say he would be back in ten minutes — a promise I'm afraid seldom fulfilled.

More and more as I came to know him better I felt I ought to tell him of Tyss's connection with the Grand Army, an organization strongly prejudiced against Negroes. Timidity and selfishness combined to keep me quiet; I feared he might buy his books elsewhere and I should lose the benefit of his companionship.

I suppose I had known Enfandin for perhaps a year when I became better acquainted with some of the activities of the Grand Army. It began the day a customer called himself to my attention with a selfconscious clearing of his throat.

"Yes sir — can I help you?"

He was a fat little man with palpably false teeth, and hair that hung down behind over his collar. However, the sum of his appearance was in no way ludicrous; rather he gave the impression of ease and authority, and an assurance so strong there was no necessity to buttress it.

"Why, I was looking for . . ." he began, and then looked at me sharply. "Say, ain't you the young fella I saw walking with a Nigra? Big black buck?"

I felt myself reddening. "There's no law against it, is there?"

He laughed. "I wouldn't know about your damyankee laws, boy. For myself I'd say there's no harm in it, no harm in it at all. Always did like to be around Nigras myself — but then, I was rared among um. Most damyankees seem to think Nigras ain't fitten company. Only goes to show how narrerminded and bigoted you folks can be. Present company excepted."

"M'sieu Enfandin is consul of the Republic of Haiti," I said; "he's a scholar and a gentleman." As soon as the words were out I was bitterly sorry for their condescension and patronage. I felt ashamed, as if I had betrayed him by offering credentials to justify my friendship with him and implying that it took special qualities to overcome the handicap of his color.

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"A mussoo, huh? Furrin and educated Nigra? Well, guess they're all right." His tone, still hearty, was slightly dubious. "Ben working here long?"

"Over three years."

"Kind of dull work, ain't it?"

"Oh no — I like to read, and there are plenty of books around here."

Without apparent effort or management he drew from me the story of my ambitions and misadventures since leaving Wappinger Falls.

"Going to be a professional historian, hay? Little out of my line, but I don't suppose they's many of um up north here."

"Not unless you count a handful of college instructors who dabble at it."

He shook his head. "A young fella with your aims could do a lot better down South, I'd think."

"Oh yes. Why, some of the most interesting research is going on right now in Leesburg, Washington-Baltimore and the University of Lima. You are a Confederate yourself, sir?"

"Southron, yes sir, I am that, and mighty proud of it. Now look a-here boy: I'll lay all my cards on the table, face up. You're a free man, not indented, you said, and you ain't getting any pay here. Now, how'd you like to do a little job for me? They's good money in it — and I imagine I'd be able to fix up one of those deals — what do they call them? scholarships — at the University of Leesburg, after."

A scholarship at Leesburg! Where the Department of History was engaged on a monumental project — nothing less than a compilation of all known source material on the War of Southron Independence! It was only with the strongest effort that I refrained from agreeing blindly.

"It sounds fine, Mr. —?"

"Colonel Tolliburr. Jest call me cunnel."

There wasn't anything remotely military in his bearing. "It sounds good to me, Colonel. What is the job?"

He clicked his too regular teeth thoughtfully. "Hardly anything at all, m'boy. I just want you to keep a list for me. List of the people that come in here regular. Especially the ones that don't seem to buy anything, but want to talk to your boss. Their names if you know um — but that ain't real important — and a sort of rough description, like five foot nine, blue eyes, dark hair, busted nose, scar on right eyebrow. And so on. Nothing real detailed. And a list of deliveries."

Was I tempted? I don't really know. "I'm sorry, Colonel. I'm afraid I can't help you."

"Not even for that scholarship and say, $100 in real money?"

I shook my head.

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"They's no harm in it, boy. Likely nothing'll come of it."

"I'm sorry."

"Two hundred?"

"It's not a matter of money, Colonel Tolliburr."

He looked at me shrewdly. "Think it over boy — no use being hasty. Any time you change your mind, come and see me or send me a telegram." He handed me a card.

"Suppose," I asked Enfandin, "one were placed in position of being an involuntary assistant in a — to a . . ." I was at loss for words which would describe the situation without being too specific. I could not tell Enfandin about Tolliburr and my problem of whether to tell Tyss of the colonel's espionage without revealing Tyss's connection with the Grand Army and were I to say anything about the Grand Army he would be quite right in condemning my deceit in not warning him earlier. Whatever I said or failed to say, I was somehow culpable.

Enfandin waited patiently while I groped, trying to formulate a question which was no longer a question. "You can't do evil that good may come of it," I burst out at last.

He nodded. "Quite so. But are you not perhaps putting the problem too abstractly? Is it not maybe that your situation — your hypothetical situation — is one of being accessory to wrong rather than face an alternative which means personal misery?"

Again I struggled for words. He had formulated one aspect of my dilemma regarding the Grand Army, but . . . "Yes," I said at last.

"It would be very nice if there were no drawbacks ever attached to the virtuous choice. Then the only ones who would elect to do wrong would be those of twisted minds, the perverse, the insane. No normal man would prefer the devious course if the straight one were just as easy. No, no, my dear Hodge, one cannot escape the responsibility for his choice simply because the other way means inconvenience or hardship or unhappiness."

I said nothing. Was it pettiness which made me contrast his position as an official of a small yet fairly secure power, well enough paid to live comfortably, with mine where a break with Tyss would mean destitution and no further chance of fulfilling the ambition every day more important to me? *Did* circumstances alter cases, and was it easy for Enfandin to talk as he did, unconfronted with harsh alternatives?

"You know, Hodge," he said, as though changing the subject, "I am what is called a career man, which merely means I have no money except my salary. This might seem much to you, but it is really little, especially since protocol insists I spend more than necessary. For the honor of my country.

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At home I have an establishment to keep up where my wife and children live —"

I had wondered about his apparent bachelorhood.

"— because, to be rudely frank, I do not think, on account of their color they would be happy or safe in the United States. Besides these expenses I make personal contributions for the assistance of black men who are — how shall we say it? — unhappily circumstanced in your country, because I have found the official allotment is never enough. (Now I have been indiscreet — you know government secrets.) Why do I tell you this? Because, my friend, I should like to help you. Alas, I cannot offer you money. But this I can do, if it will not offend your pride: I suggest you live here — it will be no more uncomfortable than the arrangements you have described in the store — and go to one of the colleges in the city. A medal or an order from the Haitian government judiciously conferred on an eminent educator will undoubtedly get you free tuition. What do you say?"

What could I say? Tell him I had not been open with him? That his generosity deserved a more worthy recipient? I protested, I muttered my thanks, not too coherently, I lapsed again into brooding silence. But the newly opened prospect was too exciting for moodiness; in a moment we were both rapidly sketching plans and supplementing each other's designs with revisions of our own.

After some discussion we decided I was to give Tyss two weeks' notice despite our original agreement making such nicety superfluous. Enfandin meanwhile took it upon himself to discuss my matriculation with several professors whom he knew.

My employer raised a quizzical eyebrow at my information as we were eating our breakfast of bread and half raw meat near the printing press. "Ah, Hodgins, you see how neatly the script works out. Nothing left to chance or choice. If you hadn't been relieved of your trifling capital by a man of enterprise whose methods were more successful than subtle, you might have fumbled at the edge of the academic world for four years and then, having substituted a wad of unrelated facts for common sense and whatever ability to think you might have possessed, fumbled for the rest of your life at the edge of the economic world. You wouldn't have met George Pondible or gotten here where you could discover your own mind without adjustment to a professorial iron maiden."

"I thought it was all arbitrary."

He gave me a reproachful look. "Arbitrary and predetermined are not synonyms, Hodgins, nor does either rule out artistry. And how artistic this development is! You will go on to become a professor yourself and construct iron maidens for promising students who might become your

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competitors. You will write learned histories, for you are obviously the spectator type. The part written for you does not call for you to be a participant, an instrument for — apparently — influencing events. Hence it is proper that you report them so future generations may imbibe the illusion they are not puppets."

He grinned at me. Instead of pointing out his inconsistencies, I again suffered the pangs for deceitfulness, this time wishing I'd told him of the Confederate agent, Colonel Tolliburr, and warned him that he was evidently under surveillance and suspicion. It almost seemed as though his mechanistic notions were valid and I was destined always to be the ungrateful recipient of kindness.

"Now," he said, swallowing the last of his breakfast, "we've work to do. Those boxes over there go upstairs. Pondible's bringing a van around for them this afternoon."

I suppose there are people who imagine employment in a bookstore is light work, not realizing the heaviness of paper. Many times during the years I was with Roger Tyss I had reason to be thankful for my farm training and muscular constitution. The boxes were deceptively small but they seemed to be packed solid with paper. Even with Tyss carrying up box for box with me I was vastly relieved when I had to quit to run an errand.

When I got back Tyss left to make an offer on someone's library. "There are only four left, and the last two are wrapped in paper. I didn't have enough boxes."

Appreciative of his having left the lighter packages for the last, I almost ran up the stairs with the first box. Returning, I tripped on the lowest step and sprawled forward. Reflexively I threw out my hands and landed on one of the paper-wrapped packages whose covering split under the impact. Its contents — neatly tied rectangular bundles — spilled out between the limp twine.

I had learned enough of the printing trade to recognize the brightly colored oblongs as lithographs, and I wondered as I stooped over to gather them up that such a job should have been given Tyss rather than to a shop specializing in such work. Even under the gaslight the colors were hard and vigorous.

And then I really looked at the bundle I was holding. "ESPANA" was enscrolled across the top; below it was the picture of a man with long nose and jutting underlip, flanked by two ornate figure fives, and beneath them the legend, "CINCO PESETAS." Spanish Empire banknotes. Bundles and bundles of them.

I needed neither expert knowledge nor minute scrutiny to tell me there was a fortune here in counterfeit money. The purpose in forging Spanish

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paper I could not see; that it was no private undertaking of Tyss's but an activity of the Grand Army, I was certain. Puzzled and apprehensive, I rewrapped the bundles of notes into as neat an imitation of the original package as I could contrive.

For the rest of the day I cast uneasy glances at the mound of boxes. Death was the penalty for counterfeiting United States coins; I had no idea of the punishment for doing the same with foreign paper but I was sure even so minor an accessory as myself would be in a sad way if some officious customer should stumble against one of the packages.

Tyss in no way acted like a man with a guilty conscience or even one with an important secret. He seemed completely unconcerned with any peril; doubtless he was daily in similar situations, only chance and my own lack of observation had prevented my discovering this earlier.

Nor did he show anxiety when Pondible didn't arrive. Darkness came and the gaslamps went on in the streets. The heavy press of traffic outside dwindled, but the incriminating boxes remained undisturbed near the door. At last there was the sound of uncertain wheels slowing up outside and Pondible's voice admonishing, "Wh-whoa!"

When he entered the store in slow dignity it was immediately manifest that he was extremely drunk. His, "Dri-driving wagon. Fell off. Fell off wagon, I mean. See?" was superfluous.

Tyss took him by the arm. "Start loading up, Hodgins. I'll get him to lie down. You'll have to do the delivering."

Rebellious refusal formed in my mind. Why should I be involved? Then I remembered how much I owed to him, and that two more weeks would see me free, and I said nothing.

He gave me an address on Twenty-Sixth Street. "Sprovis is the name. Let them do the unloading. I see there's a full feedbag in the van; that'll be a good time to give it to the horse. They'll load another consignment and drive with you to the destination. Take the van back to the livery stable. Here's money for your supper and carfare back here."

Driving slackly through the almost empty streets, I was less nervous of being stopped by a police officer than resentful of the casual course of events. I continued to be perplexed as to why the Grand Army should counterfeit Spanish pesetas on a wholesale scale.

The address, which I had trouble finding on the poorly lit thoroughfare, was one of those four storey stuccos a hundred years old, showing few signs of recent repair. Mr. Sprovis, who occupied the basement, had one ear distinctly larger than the other, an anomaly I could not help attributing to a trick of constantly pulling on the lobe. He, like the others who came out with him to unload the van, wore the Grand Army beard.

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I began to explain Pondible's absence but he shut me up quickly. "No names! Hear? No names."

I slipped the strap of the feedbag over the horse's ears and started toward Eighth Avenue.

"Hey there — where you going?"

"To get something to eat. Anything wrong with that?"

I felt him looking suspiciously at me in the darkness. "All right. But don't keep us waiting. We'll be ready to go in twenty minutes."

"That's right," added one of the others. "Don't want to keep the horse waiting. We're kind to animals, ain't we, Chuck?"

I found a lunchroom where I gorged on fish and potatoes, happy to get away from the unvarying bread and heart. My enjoyment was tarnished though by the knowledge that I was not through with the night's adventure. What freight Sprovis and his companions were loading in the van now, I had no idea — except that it was nothing innocent.

When I turned the corner into Twenty-Sixth Street again, the shadowy mass of the horse and van was gone from its place by the curb. Alarmed, I broke into a run and discovered it turning in the middle of the street. I jumped and caught hold of the dash, pulling myself aboard. "What's the idea?"

A fist caught me in the shoulder, almost knocking me back into the street. Zigzags of shock ran down my arm, terminating in a numbing pain. Desperately I clung to the dash.

"Hold it," someone growled, "it's the punk who came with. Let him in."

Another voice, evidently belonging to the man who'd hit me, admonished, "Want to watch yourself, chum. Not go jumping up like that without warning. I might a stuck a shiv in your ribs instead a my hand."

I could only repeat, "What's the idea of trying to run off with the van? I'm responsible for it."

"He's responsible for it, Chuck, see," mocked another voice from the body of the van. "It ain't polite not to wait for him."

I was wedged between the driver and my assailant; my shoulder ached and I was beginning to be frightened now my first anger had passed. These were "action" members of the Grand Army; men who committed battery, mayhem, arson, robbery and murder. I had been both foolhardy and lucky; realizing this it seemed diplomatic not to try for possession of the reins.

We turned north on Sixth Avenue; the street lights showed Sprovis driving. He was one of those who thought a horse was a mechanical contrivance for getting somewhere quickly, regardless of the weight he was pulling or whether he was tired or not. On several counts our speed was stupid; if nothing else it called attention to the van at a time when most commercial vehi-

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cles had been stabled for the night and the traffic was almost entirely carriages buggies, hacks and minibiles.

It was the monotonous chuffing of a minibile coming slowly close behind us that formed the subconscious pattern of my thoughts; when we turned eastward in the Forties I exclaimed, "There's a minibile following us!"

Even as I spoke the trackless locomotive pulled alongside and then darted ahead to pocket us by nosing diagonally toward the curb. The horse must have been too exhausted to shy; he simply stopped short and I heard the curses of the felled passengers behind me.

"Only half a block from —"

"Quick! Break the guns out —"

"No guns, you fool! Hands or knives. Get them all!"

It was not believable that this could be happening in one of New York's best residential districts in the year 1942. Nor was the speed of the whole incident normal. The tempo was so swift that if there were any spectators in the bordering windows or on the sidewalks they didn't have time to realize what was happening before it was all over.

Four men from the minibile were met by five from the van. The odds were not too unequal, for the attackers had a discipline which Sprovis and his companions lacked. An uneven, distorting light made the action seem jumpy, as though the participants were caught at static moments, changing their attitudes in flashes of invisibility between.

Their leader attempted to parley during one of these seconds of apparent inaction. "Hey, you men — we got nothing against you. They's a thousand dollars apiece in it for you —"

A fist smacked into his mouth. The light caught his face as he was jolted back, but I hardly needed its revelation to confirm my recognition of his voice. It was Colonel Tolliburr all right.

The Confederate agents had brass knuckles and blackjacks; the Grand Army men had knives. Both sides were intent on keeping the struggle quiet and inconspicuous as possible; no one shouted with anger or screamed with pain. This muffled intensity made the struggle the more gruesome. I heard the impact of blows, the grunts of effort, the choked-back expressions of pain, the scraping of shoes on the pavement and the thud of falls. One of the defenders fell, and two of the attackers, before the two remaining Southrons gave up the battle and attempted to escape.

They started for the minibile, evidently realized they would not have time to get away in it, and began running down the street. Their indecision did for them. As the Grand Army men closed in around them I saw them raise their arms in the traditional gesture of surrender. Then they were struck down.

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V

For the next days my reading was pretense. I used the opened book before me to mask my privacy from Tyss while I pondered the meaning and extent of that night's events. From scraps of conversation on which I eavesdropped, from the newspapers, from deduction and remembered fragments I reconstructed the picture which made the background. Its borders reached a long way from Astor Place.

I have explained how the world had waited for years, half in dread, half in resignation, for war between the German Union and the Confederate States. Everyone expected the point of explosion would be the Confederacy's ally, the British Empire, and that at least part of the war would be fought in the United States. Apparently we were helpless to prevent this.

The Grand Army's scheme was evidently a far-fetched and fantastic attempt to circumvent the probable course of history. The counterfeiting of Spanish money on a large scale represented an aspect of this attempt, which was nothing less than trying to force the war to start, not through the Confederacy's ally, but through the German Union's — the Spanish Empire. With enormous amounts of the spurious currency, the Grand Army was planning to circulate it by means of emissaries passing as Confederate agents and thus embroil the Confederacy with Spain in the hope the war would commence and be fought in the Spanish Empire. It was an ingenuous idea, I see now, evolved by men without knowledge of the actual mechanics of world politics.

The second delivery had represented the less extravagant and romantic side of the Grand Army. Embarking, as they had years before, on activities of violence, the fine distinction between crimes undertaken to advance a cause and allied crimes undertaken to supply the organization with funds had become obscured. Relations of increasing intimacy were established with ordinary gangsters. The association was convenient to both, for the Grand Army often supplied weapons and information in return for more immediately political favors.

Thus, Sprovis had been engaged in comparatively innocent gun-running to a gang which probably had no other connection with the Grand Army, when Tolliburr and his friends waylaid us in the minibile. Undoubtedly what they wanted was proof of the counterfeiting scheme, but they had overlooked or somehow missed the rendezvous on Twenty-Sixth Street — disastrously for them.

Any lingering sentimental notions I might have entertained about the nature of the Grand Army disappeared with the certainty Sprovis had killed

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his prisoners. At the first opportunity I used the card Tolliburr had given me, but the suspicion and lack of information with which I was received at the address confirmed my idea. No bodies were found and there was no mention in the newspapers of the disappearance of any Southrons. Naturally the Confederate government would call no attention to their fate, but I had no doubts.

Even as I reproached myself for the weakness and moral cowardice which had prevented me from refusing to be an accomplice to these crimes, I looked forward to my release. I had not seen Enfandin since his offer; in a week I should leave the bookstore for his sanctuary, and I resolved my first act should be to tell him everything. And then that dream was exploded just as it was about to be realized.

I do not know who broke into the consulate and was surprised in the act, who shot and wounded Enfandin so seriously he was unable to speak for weeks before he was finally returned to Haiti to recuperate or die. He could not get in touch with me and I was not permitted to see him; the police guard was doubly zealous to keep him from all contact since he was an accredited diplomat and a black man.

I did not know who shot him. It was quite probably no one connected either with the Grand Army or the gang to whom the guns were delivered. But I did not know. I could not know. He *might* have been shot with one of the revolvers which had been in the van that night, or by Sprovis or George Pondible. Since the ultimate chain could have led back to me, it did lead back to me.

The loss of my chance to escape from the bookstore was the least of my despair. It seemed to me I was caught by the inexorable, choiceless circumstance in which Tyss so firmly believed and Enfandin denied. I could escape neither my guilt nor the surroundings conducive to further guilt. I could not change destiny.

Was this all merely the self-torture of an introverted young man? Possibly. I only know that for a long time — long as one in his early twenties measures time — I lost all interest in life, even dallying at intervals with thoughts of suicide. I put books aside with distaste, or indifference — which was worse.

I cannot say precisely when it was my despair began to lift. I know that one day — it was cold and the snow was deep on the ground — I saw a girl walking briskly, red-cheeked, breathing in quick, visible puffs, and for the first time in months my glance was not one of indifference. When I returned to the bookstore I picked up Field Marshal Liddell-Hart's *Life of General Pickett* and opened it to the place where I had abandoned it. In a moment I was fully absorbed.

Paradoxically, once I was myself again I was no longer the same Hodge

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Backmaker. For the first time I was determined to do what I wanted instead of waiting and hoping events would somehow turn out right for me. Somehow I was going to free myself from the dead end of the bookstore — and I wasn't going to escape into indenture, either.

All this was pointed by my discovery that I was exhausting the possibilities of the volumes around me. The ones I now sought were rare and it became more difficult for me to find them. With the innocence of one who has not been part of academic life I imagined them ready to hand in a dozen college libraries.

Nor, to tell the truth, was I any longer completely satisfied with the second hand, the printed word. My friendship with Enfandin had shown me how a personal, face-to-face relationship between teacher and student could be so much more fruitful and it seemed to me such relationships could develop into ones between fellow scholars — a mutual pursuit of knowledge which was not competitive.

Additionally I wanted to search the real, the original sources, the unpublished manuscripts of participants or scholars, the old diaries and letters which might shade a meaning or subtly change the interpretation of some old, forgotten action.

Ideally my problems could be solved by a fellowship or an instructorship at some college. But how was this to be obtained without the patronage of a Tolliburr or an Enfandin? I had no credentials worth a second's consideration. Even though the immigration bars kept out graduates of British, Confederate or German universities, no college in the United States would accept a self-taught young man who had not only little Latin and less Greek, but no mathematics, languages, or sciences at all.

For a long time I considered possible ways and means, an exercise rarely more practical then spinning daydreams without contriving any steps to attain their consummation. I knew I was waiting to be acted upon, rather than attempting to initiate action on my own account, but it seemed to me impossible to exercise that free will of which Enfandin had spoken.

At last, more in a spirit of whimsical absurdity than in sober hope, I wrote out a letter of application, setting forth the qualifications I imagined myself to possess, assaying the extent of my learning with a conceit which only ingenuousness could palliate, and outlining the work I had projected for my future. With much care and many revisions I set this composition in type. It was undoubtedly a foolish gesture, but not having access to so costly a machine as a typewriter, and not wanting to reveal this by penning the letters by hand, I used this transparent device.

Tyss read one of the copies I struck off. His expression was critical. "Is it very bad?" I asked hopelessly.

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"Should have used more leading. And you could have lined it up better and eliminated the hyphens. It's things like that — the details — which make a machine to set type, that inventors have been failing to invent for so long, impractical. I'm afraid you'll never make a first-class printer, Hodgins."

He was concerned only with the typesetting, uninterested in the outcome.

The government mails being one of the favorite victims of holdup men, and pneumatic post limited to local areas, I dispatched the letters by way of Wells, Fargo to a comprehensive list of colleges. I can't say I then waited for the replies to flow in, for though I knew the company's system of heavily armed guards would insure delivery of my applications, I had no anticipation that any of the recipients would bother to answer. As a matter of fact I put it pretty well out of my mind and divided my attention between my work for Tyss, my reading, and a fruitless endeavor to devise some new scheme.

It was several months later, toward the end of September, that the telegram came signed Thomas K. Haggerwells. It read, ACCEPT NO OFFER TILL OUR REPRESENTATIVE EXPLAINS HAGGERSHAVEN.

I had sent no copy of my letter to York, Pennsylvania — where the telegram had originated — nor anywhere near it. I knew of no colleges in that vicinity. And I had never heard of Mr. (or Doctor, or Professor) Haggerwells. I might have thought the message a mean joke, except that Tyss's nature didn't run to this type of humor and no one else knew of the letters except those to whom they were addressed.

I found no reference to Haggershaven in any of the directories I consulted, which was not too surprising, considering the slovenly way such things were put together. I decided that if such a place existed I could only wait patiently till the "representative" — if there really was one — arrived.

Tyss having left for the day, I swept a little, dusted some, straightened a few of the books (any serious attempt to arrange the stock would have been futile) and took up a new emendation of Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles* by one Captain Eisenhower.

I was so deep in the good captain's analysis (what a strategist he would have made himself, given the opportunity!) that I heard no customer enter, sensed no impatient presence. I was only recalled from my book by a rather sharp, "Is the proprietor in?"

"No, ma'am," I answered, reluctantly abandoning the page. "He's out for the moment. Can I help you?"

My eyes, accustomed to the store's poor light, had the advantage over hers, still adjusting from the sunlit street. Secure in my boldness, I measured her vital femininity, a quality which seemed — if such a thing is possible —

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impersonal. I recognized an insistent sensuality (I think I have indicated my susceptibility to women; such a susceptibility I'm sure acts as an intuitive, a telepathic device) as I recognized the fact she was bareheaded, and almost as tall as I, and rather large-boned. There was nothing immediate or related to myself about it.

Nor was it connected with surface attributes; she was not beautiful, certainly not pretty, though she might have been called handsome in a way. Her hair, ginger-colored and clubbed low on her neck, waved crisply; her eyes seemed slate gray. (Later I learned they could vary from paleness to blue-green.) The fleshly greediness was betrayed, if at all, only by the width and set of her lips and the boldness of her expression.

She smiled, and I decided I had been wrong in thinking her tone peremptory. "I'm Barbara Haggerwells. I'm looking for a Mr. Backmaker" — she glanced at a slip of paper — "a Hodgins M. Backmaker who evidently uses this as an accommodation address."

"I'm Hodge Backmaker," I muttered in despair. "I — I work here."

I suppose I expected her to say nastily, So I see! or the usual inane, It must be fascinating! Instead she said, "I wonder if you've run across a book called *The Properties of X* by Whitehead?"

"Uh — I . . . is it a mystery story?"

"I'm afraid not. It's a book on mathematics by a mathematician very much out of favor. It's quite scarce; I've been trying to get a copy for a long time."

So naturally and easily she led me away from my embarrassment and into talking of books, relieving me of self-consciousness and some of the mortification in being exposed at my humble job by the "representative" of the telegram. I admitted deficient knowledge of mathematics and ignorance of Mr. Whitehead, though stoutly maintaining — truthfully — that the book was not in stock, while she assured me only a specialist would have heard of so obscure a theoretician. This made me ask, with the awe one feels for an expert in an alien field, if she were a mathematician, to which she replied, "Heavens, no — I'm a physicist. But mathematics is my tool."

I looked at her with respect. Anyone, I thought, can read a few books and set himself up as an historian; to be a physicist means genuine learning. And I doubted she was much older than I.

She said abruptly, "My father is interested in knowing something about you."

I acknowledged this with a gesture somewhere between a nod and a bow. What could I say? She had been examining and gauging me for the last half hour. "Your father is Thomas Haggerwells?"

"Haggerwells of Haggershaven," she confirmed, as though explaining

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everything. There was pride in her voice, and a hint of arrogance.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Miss Haggerwells, but I'm afraid I'm as ignorant of Haggershaven as of mathematics."

"I thought you said you'd been reading history. It's odd you've come upon no reference to the haven in the records of the past 75 years."

I shook my head helplessly. "I suppose my reading has been scattered. Haggershaven is a college?"

"No. Haggershaven is — Haggershaven." She resumed her equanimity, her air of smiling tolerance. "It's hardly a college since it has neither student body nor faculty — rather, both are one at the haven. Anyone admitted is a scholar or potential scholar anxious to devote himself to learning. Not many are acceptable."

She need hardly have added that; it was obvious I could never be one of the elect, even if I hadn't offended her by never having heard of the haven. I knew I couldn't pass the most lenient of entrance examinations to an ordinary college, much less the dedicated place she represented.

"There are no formal requirements for fellowship," she went on; "beyond the undertaking to work to full capacity, to pool all knowledge and hold back none from scholars anywhere, to contribute economically to the haven in accordance with decisions of the majority of fellows, and to vote on questions without consideration of personal gain. There! That certainly sounds like the stuffiest manifesto delivered this year."

"It sounds too good to be true."

"Oh, it's true enough. But there's another side, not so theoretical. The haven is neither wealthy nor endowed — we have to earn our living. The fellows draw no stipend; they have food, clothes, shelter, whatever books and materials they need — no luxuries. We often have to leave our work to do manual labor to bring in food or money for all."

"I've read admiringly of such communities," I said enthusiastically, "but I thought they'd all disappeared 50 or 60 years ago."

"Have you and did you?" she asked contemptuously. "You'll be surprised that Haggershaven is neither Owenite nor Fourierist. We don't live in phalansteries, practice group marriage or vegetarianism; our organization is expedient, subject to revision, not doctrinaire; contribution to the common stock is voluntary and we are not concerned with each other's private lives."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Haggerwells. I didn't mean to annoy you."

"It's all right. Perhaps I'm touchy; all my life I've seen the suspiciousness of the farmers around — sure that we're up to something immoral, or at least illegal. And the parallel distrust of the conventional schools. Detachedly, the haven may indeed be a refuge for misfits, but is it necessarily wrong not to fit into the civilization around us?"

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"I'm prejudiced because I certainly haven't fitted in myself. Do you . . . do you think there's any chance Haggershaven would accept me?" Whatever reserve I'd tried to maintain deserted me; I knew my voice expressed only childish longing.

"I couldn't say," she answered primly. "Acceptance or rejection depends entirely on the vote of the entire fellowship. All I'm here to do is offer you transportation to and from York. Neither you nor the haven is bound."

"I'm perfectly willing to be bound," I said fervently.

"You may not be so rash after a few weeks at the haven."

I was about to reply when Little Aggie — so called to distinguish her from Fat Aggie who was in much the same trade — came in. Little Aggie supplemented her nocturnal earning around Astor Place by begging in the same neighborhood during the day.

"Sorry, Aggie," I said; "Mr. Tyss didn't leave anything for you."

"Maybe the lady would help a poor working girl down on her luck," she suggested, coming very close. "My, that's a pretty outfit you have — looks like real silk, too."

Barbara Haggerwells drew away with anger and loathing on her face. "No," she said sharply. "No, nothing!" She turned to me. "I must be going — I'll leave you to entertain your friend."

"Oh, I'll go," said Little Aggie cheerfully, "no need to get in an uproar. Bye-bye."

I was frankly puzzled; the puritanical reaction didn't seem consistent with Miss Haggerwell's character as I read it. Had I been mistaken? "I'm sorry Little Aggie bothered you. She's really not a bad sort, and she does have a hard time getting along."

"I'm sure you must enjoy her company immensely. I'm sorry we can't offer similar attractions at the haven."

Apparently she thought my relations with Aggie were professional. Even so, her attitude was peculiar. I could not flatter myself she was interested in me as a man, yet her flare-up indicated a strange kind of jealousy — impersonal, like the sensuality I attributed, rightly or wrongly, to her — as though the presence of another woman was an affront. I might have been amused if this were not one more obstacle to Haggershaven.

"Please don't go yet. For one thing" — I cast around for something to hold her till I could restore a more favorable impression "— for one thing you've never told me how Haggershaven happened to get my application."

She gave me a cold, angry look. "Even though we're cranks, educators often turn such letters over to us. After all, they may want to apply themselves some day."

I slowly coaxed her back into her previous mood, and again we talked of

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books. And now I thought I felt a new warmth in her voice and glance — as though she had won some kind of victory. When she left I hoped she was not too prejudiced against me. As for myself I admitted it would be easy enough to find her desirable — if one were not afraid of the humiliations I felt it was in her nature to inflict.

VI

This time I didn't offer Tyss two weeks' notice. "Well Hodgins, I made all the appropriate valedictory remarks on a previous occasion, so I'll not repeat them, except to say the precision of the script is extraordinary."

It seemed to me Tyss was saying in a roundabout way that everything was for the best. For the first time I saw him as slightly pathetic rather than sinister; extreme pessimism and vulgar optimism evidently met, like his circular time. I smiled indulgently and thanked him sincerely for all his kindness.

In 1944 almost 100 years had passed since New York and eastern Pennsylvania were linked in a railroad network, yet I don't suppose my journey differed much in speed or comfort from one taken by Granpa Hodgins' father. The steam ferry carried me across the Hudson to Jersey. I had heard there were only financial, not technical obstacles to a bridge or tunnel. These had never been even suggested except by impractical dreamers who believed its cost could be saved in a few years by running trains directly to Manhattan.

Nor was the ferry the only antique survival on the trip. The cars were all ancient, obvious discards from Confederate or Canadian lines. Flat wheels were common; the worn out locomotives dragged them protestingly over the wobbly rails and uneven roadbed. First class passengers sat on straw or napless plush seats; second class ones stood in the aisles or on the platforms; the third class rode the roofs — safe enough at the low speed except for sudden jerks or jolts.

There were so many different lines, each jealous of exclusive rights of way, that the traveler hardly got used to his particular car when he had to snatch up his baggage and hustle for the connecting train, which might be on the same track or at the same sooty depot, but was more likely to be a mile away. Even the adjective "connecting" was often ironical for it was not unusual to find timetables arranged so its departure preceded our arrival by minutes, necessitating a stopover of anywhere from one hour to twelve.

If anything could have quieted my excitement on the trip it was the view through the dirt-sprayed windows. "Fruitless" and "unfilled" were the words coming oftenest to my mind. I had forgotten during the past six years

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just how desolate villages and towns could look when their jerrybuilt structures were sunk in apathetic age without even the false rejuvenation of newer jerrybuilding. I had forgotten the mildewed appearance of tenant farmhouses, the unconvincing attempt to appear businesslike of false-fronted stores with clutters of hopeless merchandise in their dim windows, or the inadequate bluff of factories too small for any adequate production.

We crossed the Susquehanna on an old, old stone bridge that made me think of Meade's valiant men, bloodily bandaged many of them, somnambulistically marching northward, helpless and hopeless after the Confederate triumph at Gettysburg, their only thought to escape Jeb Stuart's pursuing cavalry. Indeed, every square mile now carried on its surface an almost visible weight of historical memories.

York was old, gray and crabbed in the afternoon, but when I got off the train there I was too agitated with the prospect of being soon at Haggers-haven to take any strong impression of the town. I inquired the way, and the surly response confirmed Barbara Haggerwell's statement of local animosity. The distance — if my informant was accurate — was a matter of some ten miles.

I started off down the highway, building and demolishing daydreams, thinking of Tyss and Enfandin and Miss Haggerwells, trying to picture her father and the fellows of the haven and for the thousandth time marshaling arguments for my acceptance in the face of scornful scrutiny. The early October sun was setting on the rich red and yellow leaves of the maples and oaks; I knew the air would become chilly before long, but exertion kept me warm. I counted on arriving at the haven in plenty of time to introduce myself before bedtime.

Less than a mile out of town the highway assumed the familiar aspect of the roads around Wappinger Falls and Poughkeepsie: rutted, wavering, and with deep, unexpected holes. The rail or stone fences on either side enclosed harvested cornfields, the broken stalks a dull brass, smutted from rain, with copper colored pumpkins scattered through them. But the rich countryside showed paradoxical signs of poverty: the fences were in poor repair and the covered wooden bridges over the creeks all had signs: DANGEROUS, TRAVEL AT YOUR OWN RISK.

There were few to share the highway with me: a farmer with an empty wagon, urging his team on and giving me a churlish glance instead of an invitation to ride; a horseman on an elegant chestnut picking his course carefully between the chuckholes, and a few tramps, each bent on his solitary way, at once defensive and aggressive. The condition of the bridges accounted for the absence of minibiles. However, just about twilight a closed carriage, complete with coachman and footman on the box, rolled haughtily

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by, stood for a moment outlined atop the slope up which I was trudging and then disappeared down the other side.

I paid little attention except — remembering my boyhood and my father's smithy — to visualize automatically the coachman pulling back on the reins and the footman thrusting forward with the brake as they eased the horses downward. So when I heard first a shout and then feminine screams my instant conclusion was that the carriage had overturned on the treacherous downgrade, broken an axle, or otherwise suffered calamity.

My responsive burst of speed had almost carried me to the top when I heard the shots. First one, like the barking of an uncertain dog, followed by a volley, as though a pack were unleashed.

I ran to the side of the road, close to the field, where I could see with less chance of being seen. Already the twilight was playing tricks, distorting the shape of some objects and momentarily hiding others. It could not, however, falsify the scene in the gully below. Four men on horseback covered the carriage with drawn revolvers; a fifth, also pistol in hand, had dismounted. His horse, reins hanging down, was peacefully investigating the roadside weeds.

None of them attempted to stop the terrified rearing of the carriage team. Only their position, strung across the road, prevented a runaway. I could not see the footman, but the coachman, one hand still clutching the reins, was sprawled backward with his foot caught against the dashboard and his head hanging downward over the wheel.

The door on the far side of the carriage was swung open. I thought for a moment the passengers had managed to escape. However, as the unmounted highwayman advanced, waving his pistol, the other door opened and a man and two women descended into the roadway. After slowly edging forward I could now plainly hear the gang's obscene whistles at sight of the women.

"Well, boys, here's something to keep us warm these cold nights. Hang on to them while I see what the mister has in his pockets."

The gentleman stepped in front, and with a slight accent said, "Take the girl by all means. She is but a peasant, a servant, and may afford you amusement. But the lady is my wife; I will pay you a good ransom for her and myself. I am Don Jaime Escobar y Gallegos, attached to the Spanish legation."

One of those on horseback said, "Well now, that's real kind of you, Don High-me. We might have taken you up at that, was you an American. But we can't afford no company of Spanish Marines coming looking for us, so I guess we'll have to pass up the ransom and settle for whatever you've got handy. And Missus Don and the hired girl. Don't worry about her being a peasant — we'll treat her and the madam exactly the same."

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"Madre de Dios," screamed the lady. "Mercy!"

"It will be a good ransom," said the Spaniard, "and I give you my word my government will not bother you."

"Sorry, chum," returned the gangster. "You foreigners have a nasty habit of hanging men who make a living this way. Just can't trust you."

The man on foot took a step forward. The nearest rider swung the maid up before him and another horseman reached for her mistress. Again she screamed; her husband brushed the hand aside and put his wife behind him. At that the gangster raised his pistol and shot twice. The man and woman dropped to the ground. The maid screamed till her captor put his hand over her mouth.

"Now what did you want to do that for? Cutting our woman supply in half that way?"

"Sorry. Mighty damn' sorry. These things always seem to happen to me."

Meanwhile another of the gang slid off his horse and the two went through the dead, stripping them of jewelry and whatever articles of clothing caught their fancy before searching the luggage and the coach itself for valuables. By the time they had finished it was fully dark and I had crept to within a few feet of them, crouching reasonably secure and practically invisible while they debated what to do with the horses. One faction was in favor of taking them along for spare mounts, the other — arguing that they were easily identifiable — for cutting them out and turning them loose. The second group prevailing, they at last galloped away.

Though I'd seen dead men on New York streets, this was in some way different from the sight of a casual corpse or the episode between Sprovis and Tolliburr. It would be too simple to say I was horrified by their ruthlessness, for I still remembered the ruthlessness of Sprovis and the ruthlessness of Don Jaime Escobar in offering the servant girl was equally shocking. The opposing sides had been united in their inhumanity; I couldn't point to either and say, Good, or Bad. The mechanism of Tyss appeared — at least momentarily — as a satisfying moral refuge. If all action were but response to stimuli there was no necessity for making judgements.

I was thus meditating when a thrashing in the cornstalks just beyond the fence startled me into rigidity. Something that might have been a person stumbled toward the carriage, snuffling and moaning, to throw itself down by the prostrate bodies, its anguished noises growing more high-pitched and piercing.

By now I was sure this was a passenger who had jumped from the carriage at the start of the holdup, but whether man or women it was impossible to tell. I moved forward gingerly, but somehow I must have betrayed my presence, for the creature, with a terrified groan, slumped inertly.

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My hands told me it was a woman I raised from the ground and I sensed somehow that she was quite young. "Don't be afraid, Miss," I tried to reassure her. "I'm a friend."

I could hardly leave the girl lying in the road, nor did I feel equal to carrying her to Haggershaven — which I reckoned must be about six miles further. I tried shaking her, rubbing her hands, murmuring encouragement, all the while wishing the moon would come out, feeling somehow it would be easier to revive her in the moonlight.

At last she stirred and began whimpering again. Repeating that I was not one of the gang, I urged her to get up and come with me. I couldn't tell whether she understood or not for she merely moaned at intervals. I managed to get her arm over my shoulder and, supporting her around the waist, began walking again, impeded by my valise on one side and the girl on the other.

I could only guess how much time had been taken by the holdup and how slow my progress to Haggershaven would be. It did not seem I could arrive before midnight unless, which was unlikely, I could leave the girl at an hospitable farmhouse. And I could not imagine a more awkward hour to explain the company of a strange female.

We had made perhaps a mile — a slow and arduous one — when the moon at last came up. The light showed my companion even younger than I had thought, and extraordinarily beautiful. Her eyes were closed in a sort of troubled sleep, and she continued to moan, though at less frequent intervals.

I had just decided to stop for a moment's rest when we came upon one of the horses. He had trailed one of the clumsily cut traces and caught it on the stump of a broken sapling. Though still trembling he was over the worst of his fright; after patting and soothing him I got us onto his back and we proceeded in more comfortable fashion.

It wasn't hard to find Haggershaven; the sideroad to it was well kept and far smoother than the highway. We passed between what looked to be freshly plowed fields and came to a fair sized group of buildings, in some of which I was relieved to see lighted windows. The girl had still not spoken; her eyes remained closed and she moaned occasionally.

Dogs warned of our approach. From a dark doorway a figure came forward with a rifle under his arm. "Who is it?"

"Hodge Backmaker — I've got a girl here who was in a holdup. She's had a bad shock."

He hitched the horse to a post. I lifted the girl down. "I'm Asa Dorn," he said. "Let's go into the main kitchen — it's warm there. Here, take my arm."

She made no response and I half carried her, with Dorn trying helpfully

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to share her weight. The building through which we led her was obviously an old farmhouse, having been enlarged and remodelled a number of times. Gas lights revealed Asa Dorn as perhaps 30, with very broad shoulders and very long arms, and a dark, rather melancholy face. "There's been a gang operating around here," he informed me, "that's why I was on guard with the gun. Must be the same one."

We bustled the girl into a chair before a great fieldstone fireplace which gave the big room its look of welcome, though the even heat came from sets of steampipes under the windows. "Should we give her some soup? Or tea? Or should I get Barbara, or one of the others?"

His fluttering brushed the outside of my mind. My attention was concentrated on the girl, who looked no more than sixteen or seventeen, perhaps because she was severely dressed in some school uniform. Long, thick black hair hung softly in loose curls around her shoulders. Her face, which seemed made to reflect emotions — full, mobile lips, faintly slanted eyes, high nostrils — was instead impassive, devoid of vitality and this unnatural passivity was heightened by the dark eyes, now wide open and expressionless. Her mouth moved slowly, as though to form words, but nothing came forth except the faintest of guttural sounds.

"Why," exclaimed Dorn, "she's . . . dumb!"

She looked agonizedly toward him. I patted her arm helplessly.

"I'll go get —" he began.

A door opened and Barbara Haggerwells blinked at us. "I thought I heard . . ." Then she caught sight of the girl. Her face set in those lines of strange anger I had seen in the bookstore. "Really, Mr. Backmaker, I thought I'd explained there were no facilities here for this sort of thing."

Dorn broke in. "But Barbara, she's been in a holdup. She's dumb —"

Fury made her ugly. "Is that an additional attraction? Dumb or not, get the slut out of here! Get her out right now, I say!"

"Barbara, you're not listening. You don't understand."

She turned her back on him and faced me. "I should have remembered you were a ladies' man, Mr. Self-taught Backmaker. No doubt you imagined Haggershaven as some obscene liberty hall. Well, it isn't! You'll be wasting any further time you spend here. Get out!"

I suppose — recalling the scene with Little Aggie — I was less astonished by her frenzy than I might have been. Besides, her rage and mis-understanding were anti-climactic after the succession of excitements I had been through that day. Instead of amazement or outrage I felt only vague puzzlement and tired annoyance.

Dorn, after getting Barbara out of the room, offered stumbling explana-

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tions ("Overwork, overwork") which jolted between the patent loyalty prodding him to cover her defects and a painful desire to distract my mind from the episode. Only when we were relieved of our responsibilities by the arrival of several women who effectually sealed the girl away from all further masculine contact and he took me to Mr. Haggerwells' study, did his nervousness somewhat abate.

Thomas Haggerwells, large-boned like his daughter, with the ginger hair faded, and a florid, handsome complexion, made me welcome, but he seemed to have something else on his mind. Finally he stopped abruptly in the middle of a sentence and turned to Dorn. "Ace, Barbara is quite upset."

I thought this extreme understatement, but Dorn merely nodded. "Mis-understanding, Mr. H," and he explained the situation.

Mr. Haggerwells began pacing the flowered carpet. "Of course, of course. Naturally we can't turn the poor girl out. But how can I explain to Barbara? She . . . she came to me," he said half proudly, half apprehensively. "I don't know quite —" He pulled himself together. "Excuse me, Mr. Backmaker. My daughter is high-strung. I'm afraid I'm allowing concern to interfere with our conversation. . . ."

"Not at all, sir," I said. "I'm very tired, if you'll excuse me. . . ?"

"Of course, of course," he answered with evident relief. "Ace will show you your room. Sleep well — we will talk more tomorrow. And Ace — come back here afterward, will you?"

Barbara Haggerwells certainly seemed to have both Ace Dorn and her father pretty well cowed, I thought, as I lay awake. But it was neither Barbara nor over-stimulation from all I'd been through that day which caused my insomnia. A torment, successfully suppressed for some hours, invaded me. The chance the hold-up gang could have been supplied with Sprovis' firearms was remote far beyond probability; connecting the trip of the Escobars with the counterfeiting of Spanish pesetas was fantasy. But what is logic? I could not quench my feeling of responsibility with ridicule, nor charge myself merely with perverse arrogance in magnifying my trivial errands into accountability for all that flowed from the Grand Army. Guilty men cannot sleep because they feel guilty. It is the feeling, not the abstract guilt, which keeps them awake.

At last however, I slept, only to dream Barbara Haggerwells was a great fish pursuing me over endless roads on which my feet bogged in clinging, tenacious mud. But in the clear autumn morning my notions of the night before dwindled, even if they failed to disappear entirely.

How shall I write of Haggershaven as my eyes first saw it twenty-two years ago? Of the rolling acres of rich plowed land, interrupted here and there by stone outcroppings worn smooth and round by time, and trees in woodlots

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or standing alone, strong and unperturbed? Or the main building, grown from the original farmhouse into a great, rambling eccentricity stopping short of monstrosity only because of its complete innocence of pretence? Shall I describe the two dormitories, severely functional, escaping harshness only because they had not been built by carpenters, and though sturdy enough, betrayed the amateur touch? Or the cottages and apartments — two, four, at most six rooms — for the married fellows and their families? These were scattered all over, some so avid for privacy that one could pass unknowing within feet of the concealing woods, others bold in the sunshine on knolls or on the level.

I could tell of the small shops, the miniature laboratories, the inadequate observatory, the dozens of outbuildings. But these things were not the haven. They were merely the least of its possessions. For Haggershaven was not a material place at all, but a spiritual freedom. Its limits were only the limits of what its fellows could do and think and inquire. It was circumscribed only by the outside world, not by internal rules and taboos, competition or curriculum.

Its history was not only a link with the past, but a possible hint of what might have been if the War of Southron Independence had not interrupted the American pattern. Barbara's great-great-grandfather, Herbert Haggerwells, had been a Confederate major from North Carolina who had fallen in love with the then fat Pennsylvania countryside. After the war he had put everything — not much by Southron standards, but a fortune in depreciated, soon to be repudiated, United States greenbacks — into the farm which became the nucleus of Haggershaven. Then he married a local girl and became completely a Northerner.

Until it became imperceptible with daily custom, I used to stare at his portrait in the library, picturing in idle fancy a possible meeting on the battlefield with this aristocratic gentleman with his curling mustache and daggerlike imperial, and my own plebeian Granpa Hodgins. But the likelihood they had ever come face to face was infinitely remote; I, who had studied both their likenesses, was the only link between them.

Major Haggerwells had patronized several writers and artists, but it was his son who, seeing the deterioration of Northern colleges, had invited a few restive scholars to make their home with him. They were free to pursue their studies under an elastic arrangement which permitted them to be self-supporting through work on the farm.

Thomas Haggerwells' father had organized the scheme further, attracting a larger number of schoolmen who contributed greatly to the material progress of the haven. They patented inventions, marketless at home, which brought regular royalties from more industrialized countries. Agronomists

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improved the haven's crops and took in a steady income from seed. Chemists found ways of utilizing otherwise wasted by-products; proceeds from scholarly works — and one more popular than scholarly — added to the funds. In his will, Volney Haggerwells left the property to the fellowship.

Except for the scene after my arrival, I didn't see Barbara again for some ten days. Even then it was but a glimpse, caught as she was hurrying in one direction and I sauntering in another. She threw me a single frigid glance and went on. Later, I was talking with Mr. Haggerwells — who had proved to be not quite an amateur of history, but more than a dabbler — when, without knocking, she burst into the room.

"Father, I —" Then she caught sight of me. "Sorry. I didn't know you were entertaining."

His tone was that of one caught in a guilty act. "Come in, come in, Barbara. Hodgins is, after all, something of a protege of yours."

"Really, Father!" She was regal. Wounded, scornful, but majestic. "I'm sure I don't know enough about self-taught pundits to sponsor them. It seems too bad they have to waste your time —"

He flushed. "Please, Barbara. You really . . . really must control . . ."

Her aloof scorn became open anger. "Must I? Must I? And stand by while every pretentious swindler usurps your attention? Oh, I don't ask for any special favors as your daughter — I know too well I have none coming. But I should think at least the consideration due a fellow of the haven would prompt ordinary courtesy even when no natural affection is forthcoming!"

"Barbara, please! Oh, my dear girl, how can you . . . ?"

But she was gone, leaving him obviously distressed and me puzzled. Not at her lack of control so much as her accusation that he lacked a father's love for her. Nothing was clearer than his pride in her achievements or his protective, baffled tenderness. It did not seem possible that so wilful a misunderstanding could be maintained.

From Ace I learned this tortured jealousy was a fixture of her character. Barbara had created feuds, slandered and reviled fellows who had been guilty of nothing but trying to interest her father in some project in which she herself was not concerned. I learned much more also — much he had no desire to convey. But he was a poor hand at concealing anything, and it was clear he was helplessly subject to her, but without the usual kindly anesthetic of illusion. I guessed he had enjoyed her favors, but she evidently didn't bother to hide the fact that the privilege was not exclusive; perhaps, indeed, she insisted on his knowing. I gathered she was a fiercely moral polyandrist, demanding absolute fidelity without offering the slightest hope of reciprocal single-mindedness.

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VII

Among those at the haven was an Oliver Midbin, a student of what he chose to call the new and revolutionary science of Emotional Pathology. Tall and thin, with an incongruous little potbelly like an enlarged and far-slipped Adam's-apple, he pounced on me as a ready-made and captive audience for his theories.

"Now this case of pseudo-aphonia —"

"He means the dumb girl," explained Ace, aside.

"Nonsense," said Midbin. "Pseudo-aphonia. Purely of an emotional nature. Of course, if you take her to some medical quack he'll convince himself and you and certainly her that there's some impairment of the vocal cords —"

"I'm not the girl's guardian, Mr. Midbin —"

"Doctor. Philosophiae, Gottingen. Trivial matter."

"Excuse me, Dr. Midbin. Anyway, I'm not her guardian so I'm not taking her anywhere. But — just as a theoretical question — suppose examination did reveal a physical impairment?"

He appeared delighted, and rubbed his hands together. "Oh, it would. I assure you it would. These fellows always find what they're looking for. If your disposition is sour they'll find warts on your duodenum — in a post-mortem. Whereas Emotional Pathology deals with the sour disposition and lets the warts, if any, take care of themselves. Matter is a function of the mind. People are dumb or blind or deaf for a purpose. Now what purpose can the girl have in being dumb?"

"No conversation?" I suggested. I didn't doubt Midbin was an authority, but his manner made flippancy almost irresistible.

"I shall find out," he said firmly. "This is bound to be a simpler maladjustment than Barbara's —"

"Aw, come on," protested Ace.

"Nonsense, Dorn. Nonsense. Reticence is part of those medical ethics by which the quacks conceal incompetence. Mumbo jumbo to keep the layman from asking annoying questions. Priestly, not scientific approach. Art and mystery of phlebotomy. Don't hold back knowledge — publish it to the world."

"I just think Barbara wouldn't want her private thoughts published to the world."

"Of course not, of course not. Why? Because she's unhappy with her hatred for her dead mother. Exaggerated possessiveness for her father makes her miserable. Her fantasy —"

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"Midbin!"

"Her fantasy of going back to childhood in order to injure her mother is a sick notion she cherishes the way a dog licks a wound. Ventilate it. Ventilate it. Now, this girl's case is bound to be simpler. Bring her around tomorrow and we'll begin."

"Me?" I asked.

"Who else? You're the only one she doesn't seem to distrust."

It was annoying to have the girl's puppylike devotion observed. I realized she saw me as the only link with a normal past, but I assumed that after a few days she would turn naturally to the women who took such obvious pleasure in fussing over her affliction. Yet she merely suffered their attentions; no matter how I tried to avoid her she sought me out, running to me with muted, voiceless cries which should have been touching but were only painful.

Mr. Haggerwells had reported her presence to the sheriff's office at York where complete lack of interest was evinced. He had also telegraphed the Spanish legation who replied they knew no other Escobars than Don Jaime and his wife. The girl might be a servant or a stranger; it was no concern of His Most Catholic Majesty.

The school uniform made it unlikely she was a servant but beyond this, little was deducible. She did not respond to questions in either Spanish or English, giving no indication of understanding their meaning. When offered pencil and paper she handled them curiously, then let them slide to the floor.

Midbin's method of treatment was bizarre as any I'd heard of. His subjects were supposed to relax on a couch and say whatever came into their minds. This was the technique he had used with Barbara, as he informed me at length and in detail, and it had produced the story of her matricidal fantasy — which I found so shocking, but which he regarded with true scientific detachment — but little else.

Since this couldn't work with the dumb girl, he had to experiment with modifications. Reclining on a couch seemed to be basic however, so with my reluctant assistance, which consisted only in being present, she was persuaded to comply. But there was no question of relaxation; she lay there warily, tense and stiff, even with her eyes closed.

Again, looking at her lying there so rigidly, I could not but admit she was beautiful. But the admission was made quite dispassionately; the lovely young lines evoked no lust. I felt only vexation because her plight kept me from the wonders of Haggershaven.

It seemed to me I had to cram everything into short days, for I was sure the fellows would never accept me. I realized that these autumn weeks,

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spent in casual conversation or joining the familiar preparations for rural winter, were a period of thorough and critical examination of my fitness. There was nothing I could do to sway the decision; I could only say, when the opportunity offered, that Haggershaven was literally a revelation to me, an island of civilization in the midst of a chaotic and brutal sea. My dream was to make a landfall there.

Certainly my meager background and scraps of reading would not persuade the men and women of the haven; I could only hope they might see some promise in me. Against this I put Barbara's enmity, a hostility now exacerbated by rage at Oliver Midbin for daring to devote to another the attention which had been her due. Already I had learned something of her persistence and I was sure she could move enough of the fellows to vote against me to insure my rejection.

The gang which had been operating in the vicinity — presumably the same one I had encountered — moved on. At least no further crimes were attributed to it. Deputy Sheriff Beasley, who had evidently visited Haggershaven before without attaining much respect, came to question the girl and me.

I think he doubted her dumbness. At any rate he barked his questions so loudly and abruptly they would have terrified a far more securely poised individual. She promptly went into dry hysterics, whereupon he turned his attention to me.

He was clearly dissatisfied with my account of the holdup and left grumbling that it would be more to the point if bookworms learned to identify a man properly instead of logarithms or trigonometry. I didn't see exactly how this applied to me; I certainly was laudably ignorant of both subjects.

But if Officer Beasley was disappointed, Midbin was enchanted by the whole performance. Of course he had heard my narrative before but as he explained it, this was the first time he'd savored its possible impact on the girl. "You see, Backmaker, her pseudo-aphonia is neither congenital nor of long standing. All logic leads to the conclusion that it's the result of her terror during the experience. She must have wanted to scream, but she dared not — she had to remain dumb while she watched the murders."

For the first time it seemed possible to me there was more to Midbin than his garrulity.

"She crushed back that natural, overwhelming impulse," he went on. "She had to — her life depended on it. It was an enormous effort and the effect on her was in proportion; she achieved her object too well, so when it was safe for her to speak again she couldn't."

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It all sounded so reasonable that it was some time before I thought to ask him why she didn't understand what we said, or why she didn't write anything down when she was handed pencil and paper.

"Communication," he answered. "She had to cut off communication, and once cut off it's not easy to restore. At least, that's one aspect of it. Another one is a little more tricky. The holdup took place more than a month ago — but do you suppose the affected mind reckons so precisely? Is a precise reckoning possible? Duration may, for all we know, be an entirely subjective thing. Yesterday for you may be today for me. We recognize this to some extent when we speak of hours passing slowly or quickly. The girl may be still undergoing the agony of repressing her screams; the holdup, the murders, are not in the past for her, but in the present. And if she is, is it any wonder she is cut off from the relaxation which would enable her to realize the present?"

He pressed his middle thoughtfully. "Now, if it is possible to recreate in her mind the conditions leading up to and through the crisis, she would have the chance to vent the emotions she was forced to swallow. She might — I don't say she would — she might speak again."

I understood such a process would be lengthy, but I saw no signs he was reaching her at all, much less that he was having an effect. One of the Spanish speaking fellows translated my account of our meeting and read parts of it to the recumbent girl, following Midbin's excited stage directions and interpolations. Nothing happened.

Gradually I passed from the stage when I wanted the decision of the haven on my application to be postponed as long as possible, to the one in which the suspense became wearing. And now I learned that there was no specific date set; my candidacy would be considered along with other business next time the fellows were called on to make an appropriation, or discuss a new project. This might be next day, or not for months.

When it did come, it was anticlimactic. Several of the fellows recommended me, and Barbara simply ignored my existence. I was a full fellow of Haggershaven, securely at home for the first time since I left Wappinger Falls more than six years before. I knew that in all its history few fellows had ever voluntarily left the haven, still fewer had ever been asked to resign.

Fall became winter. Surplus timber was hauled in from the woodlots and the lignon extracted by compressed air, a method invented by one of the fellows. Lignon was the fuel which kept our hot water furnaces going and provided the gas for lighting. Everyone took part in this work, but my ineptness with things mechanical soon caused me to be set to more congenial tasks in the stables.

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I was one afternoon currying a dappled mare when Barbara, her breath still cloudy from the cold outside, came in and stood behind me. I made an artificial cowlick on the mare's flank, then brushed it glossy smooth again.

"Hello," she said.

"Uh . . . hello, Miss Haggerwells."

"Must you, Hodge?"

I roughed up the mare's flank again. "Must I what? I'm afraid I don't understand."

"I think you do. Why do you avoid me? And call me 'Miss Haggerwells' in that prim tone? Do I look so old and ugly and forbidding?"

This, I thought, is going to hurt Ace. Poor Ace, befuddled by a Jezebel; why can't he attach himself to a nice quiet girl who won't tear him in pieces every time she follows her inclinations?

I finished with the mare, put down the currycomb and dusted off my hands. "I think you are the most exciting woman I've ever met, Barbara," I said.

It is said the attainment of a cherished wish always brings disappointment, but this wasn't true of my life at Haggershaven. My brightest daydreams were fulfilled and more than fulfilled. At first it seemed the years at the bookstore were wasted, but I soon realized the value of that catholic and serendipic reading for more schematic study. I began to understand what thorough exploration of a subject meant and I threw myself into my chosen work with furious zest.

I also began to understand the central mystery of historical theory. Not chronology, but relationship is ultimately what the historian deals in. The element of time, so vital at first glance, assumes a constantly more subordinate character. That the past is past becomes increasingly less important. Except for perspective it might as well be the present or the future, or — if one can conceive it — a parallel time. I was not exploring a petrification, but a fluid.

During that winter I read philosophy, psychology, archaeology, anthropology. My energy and appetite were prodigious. Even so I found time for Barbara. The "even so" is misleading, however, for this was no diversion, no dalliance. People talk lightly of gusts of passion, but it was nothing less than irresistible force which impelled me to her, day after day. The only thing saving me from enslavement like poor Ace was the belief — correct or incorrect, I am to this day not certain — that to yield the last vestige of detachment and objectivity would make me helpless, not only before her, but to accomplish all my ambitions, now more urgent than ever.

And yet I know I denied much I could have given freely and without

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harm. I know, too, that my fancied advantage over Ace, based on the fact that I had always had an easy — perhaps too easy — way with women, was no advantage at all. I thought myself the master of the situation because her infidelities — if such a word can be used where the thought of faithfulness is explicitly ruled out — did not bother me. I was wrong; my sophistication was a lack and not an achievement.

Make no mistake. She was no superficial wanton, moved by light and fickle desires. She was driven by deeper and darker than sensual urges; her mad jealousies were provoked by an unappeasable need for constant reassurance. She had to be dominant, she had to be courted by more than one man; at the same time she had to be told constantly what she could never really believe — that she was uniquely desired.

I wondered how she did not burn herself out, not only with conflicting passions, but with her fury of work. Sleep was a weakness she despised, yet she craved much more of it than she allowed herself; she rationed her hours of unconsciousness and drove herself relentlessly. Ace's panegyrics of her importance as a physicist I discounted, but older and more learned colleagues spoke of her mathematical concepts, not merely with respect, but with awe.

She did not discuss her work with me, for our relationship was not intellectually intimate. I got the impression she was seeking the principle of heavier than air flight, a chimera which had long intrigued inventors. It seemed a pointless pursuit, for it was manifest such levitation could not hope to replace our safe, comfortable guided balloons. Later I learned she was doing nothing of the kind, but not speaking the technical jargon of her science, that was what I made of Ace's vague hints.

In the spring all of us at Haggershaven became single-minded farmers until the fields were plowed and sown. No one grudged these days taken from study; not only were we aware of the haven's dependence on economic self-sufficiency, but we were happy in the work itself. Not until the first, most feverish competition with time was over could we return, even for a moment, to our regular pursuits.

Midbin had for some while been showing the dumb girl drawings of successive stages of the holdup, again nagging and pumping me for details to sharpen their accuracy. Her reactions pleased him immensely, for she responded to the first ones with nods and the throaty noises we recognized as signs of agreement. The scenes of the assault itself, of the shooting of the coachman, the flight of the footman, and her own concealment in the cornfield evoked whimpers, while the brutal depiction of the Escobars' murder made her cower and cover her eyes.

I cannot here omit mentioning that Barbara constantly taunted me with

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what she called my "devotion" to the girl; when I protested that Midbin had drafted me for the duty she accused me of hypocrisy, lying, faithlessness, sycophancy and various assorted vices and failings. Midbin, of course, explained and excused her outbursts by his "emotional pathology", Ace accepted and suffered them as inescapable, but I saw no necessity of being subject to her tantrums. Once I told her so not, I think, too heatedly, adding, "Maybe we shouldn't see each other alone after this."

All right," she said; "yes . . . yes. All right, don't."

Her apparent calm deceived me completely; I smiled with relief.

"That's right; laugh — why shouldn't you? You have no feelings, no more than you have an intelligence. You are an oaf, a clod, a real bumpkin. Standing there with a silly grin on your face. Oh, I hate you! How I hate you!"

She wept, she screamed, she rushed at me and then turned away, crying that she hadn't meant it, not a word of it. She coaxed, begging forgiveness for all she'd said, tearfully promising to control herself after this, moaning that she needed me, and finally, when I didn't repulse her, exclaiming that it was her love for me which tormented her so and drove her to such scenes.

Perhaps this storm changed our relationship somewhat for the better, or at least eased the tension between us. At any rate it was after this she began speaking to me of her work, putting us on a friendlier, less passionate plane. I learned now how completely garbled was my notion of what she was doing.

"Heavier than air flying-machines!" she cried. "How utterly absurd!"

"All right. I didn't know."

"My work is theoretical. I'm not a vulgar mechanic."

"All right, all right."

"I'm going to show that time and space are aspects of the same entity."

"All right," I said, thinking of something else.

"What is time?"

"Uh? Dear Barbara, since I don't know anything I can slide gracefully out of that one. I couldn't even begin to define time."

"Oh, you could probably define it all right — in terms of itself. I'm not dealing with definitions but concepts."

"All right, conceive."

"Hodge, like all stuffy people your levity is vulgar."

"Excuse me. Go ahead."

"Time is an aspect."

"So you mentioned. I once knew a man who said it was an illusion. And another who said it was a serpent with its tail in its mouth."

"Mysticism. Time, matter, space and energy are all aspects of the cosmic

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entity. Interchangeable aspects. Theoretically it should be possible to translate matter into terms of energy and space into terms of time; matter-energy into space-time."

"It sounds so simple I'm ashamed of myself."

"To put it so crudely that the explanation is misleading: suppose matter is resolved into its component —"

"Atoms?" I suggested, since she seemed at loss for a word.

"Something more fundamental than atoms. We have no word because we can't quite grasp the concept yet. Essence, perhaps, or the theological 'spirit'. If matter —"

"A man?"

"Man, machine or chemical compound," she answered impatiently. "Is resolved into its essence it can presumably be re-assembled at another point of the time-space aspect."

"You mean . . . like yesterday?"

"No — and yes. What is 'yesterday'? A thing — or an aspect? Oh, words are useless. Even with mathematical symbols you can hardly. . . . But someday I'll establish it. Or lay the groundwork for my successors. Or the successors of my successors."

I nodded. Midbin was at least half right; Barbara was emotionally sick. For what was this "theory" of hers but the rationalization of a daydream, the daydream of discovering a process of going back through time to injure her dead mother and so steal all of her father's affections?

At the next meeting of the fellows Midbin asked an appropriation for experimental work and the help of haven members in the project. Since both requests were modest, their granting would ordinarily have been a formality. But Barbara asked politely if Dr. Midbin wouldn't like to elaborate a little on the purpose of his experiment.

I knew her manner was a danger signal. However Midbin merely answered good-humoredly that he proposed to test a theory of whether an emotionally induced physical handicap could be cured by recreating in the subject's mind the shock which had caused — if he might use a loose and inaccurate term — the impediment.

"I thought so. He wants to waste the haven's money and time on a little tart with whom he's having an affair while important work is held up for lack of funds."

One of the women called out, "Oh, Barbara, no," and there were exclamations of disapproval. Mr. Haggerwells, after trying unsuccessfully to hold Barbara's eye, said, "I must apologize for my daughter —"

"It's all right," interrupted Midbin. "I understand Barbara's notions.

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I'm sure no one here really thinks there is anything improper between the girl and me. Outside of this, Barbara's original question seems quite in order to me. Briefly, as most of you know, I've been trying to restore speech to a subject who lost it — again I use an inaccurate term for convenience — during an afflicting experience. Preliminary experiments indicate the likelihood of satisfactory response to my proposed method, which is simply to employ a kinematic camera like those used in making entertainment photinugraphs —"

"He wants to turn the haven into a tinugraph mill with the fellows as mummers!"

"Only this once, Barbara. Not regularly; not as routine."

At this point her father insisted the request be voted on without any more discussion. I was tempted to vote with Barbara, the only dissident, for I foresaw Midbin's photinugraph relying pretty heavily on me, but I didn't have the courage. Instead, I merely abstained, like Midbin himself, and Ace.

The tinugraph did indeed demand much of my time. I had to set the exact scene where the holdup had taken place and approximate as nearly identical conditions as possible. (Here Midbin was partially foiled by the limitations of his medium, being forced to use the camera in full sunlight rather than dusk.) I dressed and instructed the actors in their parts, rehearsing and directing them throughout. The only immunity I got was Midbin's concession that I needn't play the part of myself, since in my early role of spectator I would be invisibly concealed, and the succor was omitted as irrelevant to the therapeutic purpose. Midbin himself, of course, did nothing but tend his camera.

Any tinugraph mill would have snorted at our final product and certainly no tinugraph lyceum would have condescended to show it. After much wavering Midbin had finally decided against making a phonoto of it, feeling that the use of sound would add no value but considerable expense, so that the film did not even have this feature to recommend it. Fortunately, for whatever involuntary professional pride involved, no one was present at the first showing but the girl and I, Ace to work the magic-lantern, and Midbin.

In the darkened room the pictures on the screen gave — after the first few minutes — such an astonishing illusion of reality that when one of the horsemen rode toward the camera we all reflexively shrank back a little. In spite of its amateurishness the tinugraph seemed to us an artistic success, but no triumph in satisfying the reason for its existence. The girl reacted no differently than she had toward the drawings: her inarticulate noises ran the same scale from pleasure to terror; nothing new was added. But

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Midbin slapped Ace and me on the back, predicting he'd have her talking like a politician before the year was out.

I suppose the process was imperceptible; certainly there was no discernible difference between one session and the next. Yet the boring routine was continued day after day, and so absolute was Midbin's confidence that we were not too astonished after some weeks when, at the moment "Don Jaime" folded in simulated death, she fainted and remained unconscious for some time.

After this we expected — at least Ace and I did, Midbin only rubbed his palms together — that she would begin talking at a great rate. She didn't, but a few showings later, at the same crucial point, she screamed. It was a genuine scream, high-pitched and piercing, bearing small resemblance to the strangled noises we were accustomed to. There was no doubt Midbin had been vindicated; no mute could have voiced that full, shrill cry.

Pursuing another of his theories, Midbin soon gave up the idea of helping her express the words in her mind in Spanish, but concentrated on teaching her English. It was soon clear she must have had some grounding in this language, and it seemed an amazingly short time before she pointed to me and said clearly, "Hodge . . . Hodge . . ."

A month of common nouns followed, interspersed with a few easy verbs, before she touched her own breast and said, shyly, "Catalina."

Her name was Catalina García; she was the much younger sister of Doña María Escobar, with whom she had lived after the death of her parents. So far as she knew she had no other relatives. Please — we would not send her away from Haggershaven, would we?

Again Mr. Haggerwells communicated with the Spanish diplomats, recalling his original telegram and mentioning their aloof reply. He was answered in person by an official who acted as though he himself had composed the disclaiming response — perhaps he had. Nevertheless he confirmed the existence of one Catalina García and at last satisfied himself that she and our Catalina were the same person. Further, the Señorita García was heiress to a moderate estate. According to embassy records the señorita was not yet eighteen; as an orphan living in foreign lands she was a ward of the Spanish Crown. The señorita would return with him to Philadelphia where she would be suitably accommodated until repatriation could be arranged. The — ah — institution could submit a bill for board and lodging during her stay.

But Catalina protested so earnestly, appealing alternately to me and to Mr. Haggerwells, that Midbin, who was hovering solicitously, insisted he could not guarantee against a relapse. The official shrugged, managing to intimate in that gesture his opinion that the haven was of a very shady

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character indeed and had possibly engineered the holdup itself. However, if the señorita wished to remain, he had no authority at the moment either to inquire into what influences had persuaded her nor to remove her by — ah — nor to remove her. Of course the — ah — institution understood it could hope for no further compensation, that the señorita would be visited without notification from time to time by an official, that she might be removed whenever His Most Catholic Majesty saw fit, that none of her estate would be released before her eighteenth birthday, and that the whole affair was entirely irregular.

After he left, Catalina put her head against my collarbone, sobbing with relief, and I must admit, now she was able to talk I no longer found her devotion so tiresome — even though I was somewhat uneasy lest Barbara discover us in this situation.

VIII

And now I come to the period of my life which stands in such sharp contrast to all the rest. Was it really eight years I spent at Haggershaven? The arithmetic is indisputable: I arrived in 1944 at the age of twenty-three; I left in 1952 at the age of 31. Indisputable, but not quite believable; like the happy countries which are supposed to have no history I find it hard to go over those eight years and divide them by remarkable events. They blended too smoothly, too contentedly into one another.

There was no question about success in my chosen profession — not even the expected alternation of achievement and disappointment. Once started on the road I kept on going at an even, steady pace. For what would have been my doctoral thesis I wrote a paper on *The Timing of General Stuart's Maneuvers During August 1863 in Pennsylvania.* This received flattering comment from scholars as far away as the Universities of Lima and Cambridge; because of it I was offered instructorships at highly respectable schools.

But I could not think of leaving the haven. The world into which I had been born had never been revealed for what it was until I had escaped from it.

The idea of returning to enter into daily competition with other underpaid, overdriven drudges striving fruitlessly to apply a dilute coating of culture to the unresponsive surface of unwilling students was abhorrent. Life at Haggershaven suited me perfectly.

In those eight years, as I broadened my knowledge I narrowed my field. Perhaps it was presumptuous to take the War of Southron Independence as my specialty when there were already so many comprehensive books on

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the subject and so many celebrated historians engaged with this epochal event. However, my choice was not made out of arrogance but of fascination, and the readiness of the scene and materials influenced the selection of my goal, which was to be a definitive work on the last thirteen months of the war, from General Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania to the capitulation at Reading.

My monographs were published in learned Confederate, British, and German journals — there were none in the United States — and I was rejoiced when they brought attention, not so much to me as to Haggershaven. I could contribute only this notice and my physical labor; on the other hand I asked little beyond food, clothing and shelter — just books. My field trips I took on foot, often earning my keep by casual labor for farmers, paying for access to private collections of letters or documents by indexing and arranging them.

But it was not the time devoted to scholarship which alone distinguished these eight years. The absence of the shadows of anxiety and violence, the freedom from constant harassment and fear, as well as the positive aspects of life at the haven — the companionship of like-minded people, labor to achieve ends rather than just to stay alive — the surety of acceptance and unselfish praise for achievement, all set this time apart, so I think of it as a golden period, a time of perpetual warm sunshine.

Though sometimes I was inclined to wonder if Barbara Haggerwells' neurosis was not precarious — on the edge of sanity, and there were moments when I found her morality distasteful, it was impossible to deny her attraction. Often we were lovers for as long as a month before the inevitable quarrel came, followed by varying periods of coolness between us. But during those weeks of distance I remembered how she could be tender and gracious, just as during our intimacy I remembered her ruthlessness and dominance.

It was not only her temperamental outbreaks nor even her unappeasable hunger for love and affection which thrust us apart. It was increasingly hard for her to leave her work behind even for moments. She was never allowed to forget either by her own insatiable drive nor by outside acknowledgement that she was already one of the foremost physicists in the country. She had been granted so many honorary degress she no longer traveled to receive them; offers from foreign governments of well-paid jobs connected with their munitions industries were frequent. Articles were written about her equation of matter, energy, space and time; acclaiming her as a revolutionary thinker; though she dismissed them contemptuously as evaluations of elementary work they nevertheless added to her isolation and curtailed her freedom.

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Midbin was, in his way, as much under her spell as Ace or myself. His triumph over Catalina's dumbness he took lightly now it was accomplished; stabilizing Barbara's emotions was the victory he wanted. Patiently, whenever she would grant the time — and this was increasingly less often — he tried with her new techniques, but to no apparent effect. Indeed, it seemed he was, if anything, retrogressing; she no longer paid him the respect of even partial co-operation; instead she made fun of his efforts.

There was a great unlikeness between Barbara and Catalina. That the Spanish girl had in her own way as strong a will was demonstrated in her determination to become part of Haggershaven. She had gone resolutely to Thomas Haggerwells. She knew quite well, she told him, she had neither the aptitudes nor qualifications for admission to fellowship, nor did she ask it. All she wanted was to live in what she now regarded as her only home. She would gladly do any work from washing dishes to running errands. When she came of age she would turn over whatever money she inherited to the haven without qualification.

Long after this and similar conversations I heard how he had patiently pointed out that a Spanish subject was a citizen of a wealthier and more powerful nation than the United States; as an heiress she could enjoy the luxury and distractions of Madrid and eventually make a suitable marriage. How silly it would be to give up all these advantages to become an unnoticed, penniless drudge for a group of cranks near York, Pennsylvania.

Catty — as we soon called Catalina — was adamant. What Mr. Haggerwells said might be true, but she was simply not interested. Evidently he realized the quality of her determination for eventually he proposed to the fellows that she be allowed to stay and the offer of her money be rejected. the motion was carried, with only Barbara — who spoke long and bitterly against it — voting "no."

Catty, she of enchanting voice, so expressive, so controlled, was a very different creature from the nameless dumb girl. Even her beauty, always undeniable, was now heightened and sharpened by the fact of her speech. I suppose it is a confession of weakness or obtuseness to say that where I had been inclined to impatience or even annoyance at her former all too open devotion, I now felt deprived and even pettish at its lack.

I don't mean by this that Catty was either disingenuous or coquettish. But with the return of speech came a certain maturity and an undeniable dignity. She was self-possessed, self-contained and just a trifle amusedly aloof. Having made it clear she had interest in no other man, she withdrew from all competition. When I wished to seek her out she was there, but she made no attempt to call me to her.

Perhaps I sensed from the beginning what was to happen. Perhaps I was

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polygamous as Barbara was polyandrous or Catty monogamous. It would be inaccurate to say I wavered between the two; every break with Barbara drew me closer to Catty and there was never any counter-force to reverse the process. What was adventurous and juvenile in me reached out to Barbara; whatever was stable and mature pulled me toward Catty.

The final decision (was it final? I don't know. I shall never know now) hardened when I had been nearly six years at Haggershaven. It had been "on" between Barbara and me for the longest stretch I could recall and I had even begun to wonder if some paradoxical equilibrium had not somehow finally been established in our volatile relationship.

As always, when the mutual hostility which complemented our mutual attraction was eased, Barbara spoke of her work. In spite of such occasional confidences, it was still not her habit to talk of it with me. That intimacy was obviously reserved for Ace, and I didn't begrudge it him, for after all he understood it and I didn't. But now I suppose she was so full of the subject she could hardly hold back, even from one who could hardly distinguish between thermodynamics and kinesthetics.

"Hodge," she said, gray eyes greenish with excitement, "I'm not going to write a book."

This hardly seemed startling. "That's nice," I answered idly. "New, too. Saves time, paper, ink. Sets a different standard; from now on scholars will be known as 'Jones, who didn't write *The Theory of Tidal Waves*', 'Smith, un-author of *Gas and Its Properties*', or 'Backmaker, non-recorder of *Gettysburg And After*.' "

"Silly. I only meant it's become customary to spend a lifetime formulating principles — then someone else comes along and puts your principles into practice. It seems more sensible for me to demonstrate my own conclusions instead of writing about them."

I still didn't grasp the import. "You're going to demonstrate — uh . . . ?"

"Cosmic entity."

"You mean you're going to turn matter into space or something like that?"

"Something like that. I intend to attempt translating matter-energy into terms of space-time."

I started up. "You're going to —" I groped for words. "Build an engine which will move through time?"

"That's putting it crudely. But it's close enough for a layman."

"You once told me your work was theoretical. That you were no vulgar mechanic."

"I'll become one."

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"Barbara, you're crazy! As a philosophical abstraction this theory of yours is interesting —"

"Thank you!"

"Barbara, listen to me. Midbin —"

"I haven't the faintest interest in Midbin's stodgy fantasies."

"He has in yours, though, and so have I. Don't you see, this decision is based on the fantasy of going back through time to — uh — injure your mother —"

"Midbin is a coarse, stupid, insensate lout. He has taught the dumb to speak, but he's too much of a fool to understand anyone of normal intelligence. He has a set of idiotic theories about diseased emotions and he fits all facts into them even if it means chopping them up to do it or inventing new ones to piece them out. 'Injure my mother' indeed! I have no more interest in her than she ever had in me."

"Ah, Barbara —"

" 'Ah, Barbara,' " she mimicked. "Run along to your pompous windbag of a Midbin, or your cow-eyed Spanish strumpet —"

"Barbara, I'm talking as a friend. Leave Midbin and Catty and personalities out of it and just look at it this way. Don't you see the difference between promulgating a theory and trying a practical demonstration which will certainly appear to the world as going over the borderline into charlatanism. Like a spiritualist medium or —"

"That's enough! 'Charlatan'. You unspeakable guttersnipe. What do you know about anything beyond the seduction of cretins? Go back to your trade, you errand boy!"

"Barbara —"

Her hand caught me across my mouth. Then she strode away.

The fellows of Haggershaven were not enthusiastic for her project. 1950 was a bad year; the war was coming closer. At the least, what was left of United States' independence would likely be extinguished. Our energies at the haven had to be directed toward survival rather than new and expensive ventures. Still, Barbara Haggerwells was a famous figure commanding great respect; reluctantly the fellows voted an appropriation.

We had not spoken since the day of the quarrel, nor was there inclination on either side toward reconciliation. She and Ace with a group of the fellows attacked the preliminary job of remodelling an old barn furiously, sawing and hammering, bolting iron beams together, piping in gas for reflected lights which allowed them to work into the night. As for me, I had little interest. I did not believe Barbara Haggerwells would play a further part in my life.

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For I finally saw Catty as she really was: loyal, steadfast, sustaining. Suddenly, I was utterly unable to understand how I had hesitated so long. Barbara now seemed brittle and masculine beside Catty. It was Catty with whom I wanted to spend the rest of my life and I regretted wasted time.

Something of this I told her and begged forgiveness.

"Dear Hodge," she answered, "there is nothing to forgive. Love is not a business transaction, or a case at law in which justice is sought, nor a reward for having good qualities. I understand you, Hodge, better, I think than you understand yourself. You are not satisfied with what is readily obtained; otherwise you would have been content back in — what is the name? — Wappinger Falls. I have known this for a long time and I could, I think (you must excuse my feminine vanity), have enticed you at any moment by pretending fickleness. Besides, I think you will make a better husband for realizing your incapacity to deal with Barbara."

I can't say I enjoyed this speech. I felt, in fact, rather humiliated, or at least healthily humbled. Which was no doubt what she intended, and as it should be. It also revealed that Catty bore no animosity toward her former rival. This didn't surprise me, but Barbara's attitude did, for as soon as Catty's engagement to me was known the two girls became very friendly. I almost wrote, "became fast friends," but this would overlook their lack of common interests on which to build genuine friendship. However, Catty now spent hours with Barbara and Ace in the workshop (as they called the converted barn) and her real admiration for Barbara grew. Her conversation frequently turned to Barbara's genius, courage and imagination.

Naturally this didn't please me too well, but I could hardly ask Catty to forego society I had so recently found enchanting, nor establish a taboo against mention of a name I had lately whispered with ardor. Besides, I was exhilarated by my own plans. I had completed my notes for *Chancellorsville to the End*, and Catty and I were to be married as soon as volume one was published — shortly after my thirtieth and Catty's twenty-fourth birthday. Although there was no doubt the book would bring an offer from one of the great Confederate universities, Catty was firm for one of the miniature cottages or even smaller apartments the haven provided for married fellows.

From Catty's talk I knew Barbara was running into increasing difficulties now the workshop was complete and actual construction of what was referred to — with unnecessary crypticism, I thought — as HX-1 had begun. The impending war created scarcities, particularly of such materials as steel and copper, of which latter metal HX-1 seemed inordinately greedy. I was not surprised when the fellows apologetically refused Barbara a new appropriation.

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The next day Catty said, "Hodge, you know the haven wouldn't take my money."

"And quite right too. Let the rest of us put in everything we get. We owe it to the haven anyway. But you should keep your independence."

"Hodge, I'm going to give it all to Barbara for her HX-1."

"What? Oh, nonsense!"

"Is it any more nonsensical for me to put in money I didn't do anything to get than for her and Ace to put in time and knowledge and labor?"

"Yes, because she's got a crazy idea and Ace has never been quite sane as far as Barbara's concerned. If you go ahead and do this you'll be crazy as they are."

When Catty laughed I remembered with a pang the long months when that lovely sound had been strangled by terror inside her so that these priceless instants were irrevocably lost. I also thought with shame of my own failure and contumely. Had I appreciated her when her need was greatest I might have changed the long and painful process which restored her voice in Midbin's way, or at least eased and quickened it.

"Perhaps I'm crazy — do you think they would admit me to fellowship on that basis? Anyway, I believe in Barbara, even if the fellows don't. Not that I'm criticizing the haven. You were right to be cautious, you have a great deal to consider. I haven't. I believe in her — or perhaps I feel I owe her something. Anyway, with my money she can finish her project. I only tell you this because you may not want to marry me under the circumstances."

"You think I'm marrying you for your money?"

She smiled. "Dear Hodge. You are in some ways so young. No, I know very well you aren't marrying me for money. That would be too practical, too grown up. I think you might not want to marry a woman who'd give all her money away. Especially to Barbara Haggerwells."

"Catty, are you doing this absurd thing to get rid of me? Or to test me?"

This time she again laughed aloud. "Now I'm sure you will marry me after all and turn out to be a puzzled but amenable husband. You are my true Hodge, who studies a war because he can't understand anything simpler or subtler."

She wasn't to be dissuaded from the quixotic gesture. I might not understand subtleties but I was sure I understood Barbara well enough. Foreseeing her request for more funds would be turned down, she had deliberately cultivated Catty in order to use her. Now she'd gotten what she wanted she'd undoubtedly drop Catty or revert to her accustomed virulent abuse.

She did neither. If anything, the amity grew. Catty's vocabulary added words like "magnet," "coil," "induction," "particle," "light-year," "con-

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tinuum" and many others either incomprehensible or uninteresting to me. Breathlessly she described the strange, asymmetric structure taking shape in the workshop, while my mind was busy with Ewell's Corps and parrott guns and the weather chart of southern Pennsylvania for July, 1863.

The great publishing firm of Ticknor, Harcourt & Knopf contracted for my book — there was no publisher in the United States equipped to handle it — and sent me a sizable advance in Confederate dollars which became even more sizable converted into United States' money. I read the proofs of volume one in a state of semi-consciousness, sent the inevitable telegram changing a footnote on page 99, and waited for the infuriating mails to bring me my complimentary copies. The day after they arrived (with a horrifying typographical error right in the middle of page 12), Catty and I were married.

Perhaps reticence in this narrative has given less than a picture of my wife. I can only say that no man could ask for one more beautiful, finer or more desirable. With the approval of the fellows, I used part of the publisher's advance for a honeymoon. We spent it going over some of the battlefields of the War of Southron Independence.

We settled down in the autumn of 1951, I to work on volume two, Catty to help me and keep house. Somewhat, I admit, to my disappointment, she resumed her daily visit to Barbara's workshop and again regaled me with accounts of my ex-sweetheart's progress.

HX-1 was to be completed in the late spring or early summer. I was not surprised that Barbara's faith survived actual construction of the thing, but that such otherwise level headed people as Ace and Catty could envisage breathlessly the miracles about to happen was beyond me. Ace, even after all these years, was still bemused — but Catty . . . ?

Just before the turn of the year I got the following letter:

LEE & WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Department of History
Leesburg, District of Calhounia, CSA.
December 19, 1951

Mr. Hodgins M. Backmaker
"Haggershaven"
York,
Pennsylvania, USA.

Sir:

On page 407 of *Chancellorsville to the End*, volume I, *Turning Tides*, you write, "Chronology and topography — timing and the use of space

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— were to be the decisive factors, rather than population and industry. Stuart's detachment, which might have proved disastrous, turned out extraordinarily fortunate for Lee, as we shall see in the next volume. Of course the absence of cavalry might have been decisive if the Round Tops had not been occupied by the Southrons on July 1 . . . ".

Now, sir, evidently in your forthcoming analysis of Gettysburg you hold (as I presume most Yankees do) to the theory of fortuitousness. We Southrons naturally ascribe the victory to the supreme genius of General Lee, regarding the factors of time and space not as forces in themselves but as opportunities for the display of his talents.

Needless to say, I hardly expect you to change your opinions, rooted as they must be in national pride. I only ask that before you commit them, and the conclusions shaped by them, to print that you satisfy yourself, *as an historian*, of their validity in this particular case. In other words, sir, as one of your readers (and may I add, one who has enjoyed your work), I should like to be assured that you have studied this classic battle as carefully as you have the engagements described in volume I.

With earnest wishes for your success,

I remain, sir, cordially yours,

Jefferson Davis Polk

This letter from Dr. Polk, the foremost historian of our day, author of the monumental biography, *The Great Lee*, produced a crisis in my life. Had the Confederate professor pointed out flaws in my work, or even reproached me for undertaking it at all with inadequate equipment, I would, I trust, have acknowledged the reproof and continued to the best of my ability. But this letter was an accolade. Without condescension Dr. Polk admitted me to the ranks of serious historians and besought me as an equal to consider the depth of evaluation.

The truth is I was not without my own increasing doubts. Doubts I had not allowed to rise to the surface of my mind and disturb my plans. Polk's letter brought them into the open.

I had read everything available. I had been over the ground between the Maryland line, South Mountain, Carlisle and the haven so that I could draw a detail map from memory. I had turned up diaries, letters and accounts which had never been published. Yet, with all this, I was not sure I had the whole story, even in the sense of wholeness that historians, knowing they can never achieve a knowledge of every detail, accept. I was not sure that what I thought was the final and just estimate was really either one, or that I had the grand scene in perfectly proper perspective. I admitted to myself the possibility I had perhaps been too rash, too precipitate, in under-

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taking *Chancellorsville to the End.* I knew the shadowy sign — the one which says in effect, You are ready — had not been given. My confidence was shaken.

What could I do? The entire work was contracted for. The second volume was promised for delivery some eighteen months hence. My notes for it were complete; this was no question of revising, but of wholly re-examining, re-valuing and probably discarding them for an entirely new start. It was a job so much bigger than the original, one so discouraging I felt I could not face it — and yet I knew it would be corrupt to produce a work lacking certain conviction.

Catty responded to my awkward recapitulation in a way at once heartening and strange. "Hodge," she said, "you're changing and developing — and for the better, even though I love you as you were. Don't be afraid to put the book aside for a year — ten years if necessary. You must do it to satisfy yourself; never mind what the publishers or the public say. But Hodge, you mustn't, in your anxiety, try any shortcuts. Promise me that."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Catty dear. There are no shortcuts in the writing of history."

She looked at me thoughtfully. "Remember that, Hodge. Oh, remember it well."

IX

I could not bring myself to follow the promptings of my conscience and Catty's advice, nor could I use my notes as though Dr. Polk's letter had never come to shatter my complacency. As a consequence I worked not at all, thus adding to my feelings of guilt and unworthiness. I wandered about the haven, fretful and irritable, interrupting more diligent fellows and generally making myself a nuisance. Inevitably I found my way into Barbara's workshop.

She and Ace had done a thorough job on the old barn. Iron beams held up a catwalk running in a circle about ten feet overhead. On the catwalk there were at intervals what appeared to be batteries of telescopes, all pointed inward and downward at the center of the floor. Just inside the columns was a continuous ring of clear glass, perhaps four inches in diameter, fastened to the beams with glass hooks. On closer inspection the ring proved not to be in one piece, but in sections, ingeniously held together with glass couplings. Back from this circle, around the walls, were various engines, all enclosed except for dial faces and regulators. From the roof was suspended a large, polished reflector.

There was no one in the barn and I wandered about, cautiously avoiding

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the various pieces of apparatus whose purpose and operation were completely mysterious to me. For a moment I meditated — meanly perhaps — that all this had been paid for by my wife's money. Then I berated myself. Catty owed all she had to the haven, as I did. True, the money might have been put to better use than this one of encouraging a senseless project, but there was no guarantee that it would have been more productive allotted to astronomy or zoology. During eight years at the haven I'd seen many promising schemes come to nothing.

"Like it, Hodge?"

Barbara had come up, unheard, behind me. This was the first time we had been alone together since our break, two years before.

"It looks like a tremendous amount of work," I evaded.

"It was a tremendous amount of work. This construction has been the least of it. Now it's done. Or has begun — depending how you look at it."

"All done?"

She nodded, her face triumphant. "First test today."

"Oh well . . . in that case —"

"Don't go, Hodge — please. I meant to ask you and Catty to the more formal trial, but now you're here for the preliminary I'm glad. Ace, Father and Midbin'll be along in a minute."

"Midbin?"

"I insisted. It'll be nice to show him the mind can produce something besides fantasies and hysterical hallucinations."

I began to speak, then swallowed the words. The dig at Catty was insignificant beside the supreme confidence, the abnormal assurance prompting the invitation to witness a test which could only reveal the impossibility of applying her cherished theories. I felt an overwhelming pity. "Surely," I said at last, seeking to make some preparation for the disillusionment that was bound to come, "surely you don't expect it to work the first time?"

"Why not? There are bound to be minor adjustments to be made, allowances for erratic chronology caused by phenomena like the pull of comets and so forth. It may be some time before Ace can set me down at the exact year, month, day, hour and minute agreed upon. But the fact of space-time-energy-matter correspondence can just as well be established this afternoon as next year."

She was unaccountably at ease for someone whose lifework was about to be weighed. I have shown more nervousness in discussing a disputed date with the honorary secretary of a local historical society.

"Sit down," she invited; "there's nothing to do or see till Ace comes. I've missed you, Hodge."

I felt this was a dangerous remark, and wished I'd stayed far away from

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the workshop. I hooked my leg over a stool — there were no chairs — and coughed to hide the fact I was afraid to answer, I've missed you too, and afraid not to.

"Tell me about your own work, Hodge. Catty says you're having difficulties."

I was annoyed with Catty, but whether for confiding in Barbara or specifically for revealing something unheroic, I didn't stop to consider. At any rate this annoyance probably diluted the feeling I was somehow disloyal in conversing with Barbara at all. Or it may be the old, long-established bond — I almost wrote, of sympathy, but it was so much more complex than the word indicates — was re-awakened by proximity and put me in the mood to tell my troubles. It is even possible I had the altruistic purpose of fortifying Barbara against inevitable disappointment on a misery-loves-company basis. Be that as it may, I found myself pouring out the whole story.

She jumped up and put her hands on my shoulders. I would not be truthful if I said that, looking into her eyes, gray and warm, I did not feel some reciprocation. "Hodge! It's wonderful — don't you see?"

"Oh . . ." I was completely confused. "I . . . uh . . ."

"Look: now you can go back — back to the past in your own person and see everything with your own eyes, instead of relying on second- or third-hand accounts. You can verify every fact, study every move, every actor. You can write history as no one ever did before, for you'll be writing it as a witness, yet with the perspective of a different period. You'll be taking the mind of the present, with its judgment and its knowledge of the patterns, back to receive the impressions of the past. It almost seems HX-1 was devised especially for this."

There was no doubt she believed, that she was really and unselfishly glad her work could aid mine. I was overcome by pity, helpless to soften the blow of disillusionment to fall so soon, and filled with an irrational hatred of the great apparatus she had built and which was about to destroy her.

I was saved from having to mask my emotions by the arrival of her father, Ace and Midbin. Thomas Haggerwells began tensely, "Barbara, Ace says you intend to test this — this thing on yourself. Is that true?"

Midbin didn't wait for her answer. I thought, with something of a shock, Midbin has gotten old; I never noticed it. "Listen to me. There's no point now in saying part of your mind realizes the impossibility of this demonstration and that it's willing for you to annihilate yourself in the attempt and so escape from conflicts which have no resolution —"

Ace Dorn, who looked as strained as they, in contrast to Barbara's ease, growled, "Let's go."

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She smiled reassuringly at us. "Please, Father, don't worry. And Oliver . . ."

Her smile was almost mischievous and very unlike the Barbara I had known. "Oliver, HX-1 owes more to you than you will ever know."

She ducked under the transparent ring and walked to the center of the floor, glancing up at the reflector, moving an inch or two to stand directly beneath it. "The controls are already adjusted to minus 52 years and eleven days," she informed us conversationally. "Purely arbitrary. One date is good as another, but January 1, 1900 is an almost automatic choice. I'll be gone 60 seconds. Ready, Ace?"

"Ready." Ace had been slowly circling the engines, checking the dials. He took his place before the largest, holding a watch in his hand. "Three forty-three and ten," he announced.

Barbara was consulting her own watch. "Three forty-three and ten," she confirmed. "Make it at three fourty-three and twenty."

"OK. Good luck."

"You might at least try it on an animal first," burst out Midbin, as Ace twirled the valve under his hand. The transparent ring glowed, the metal reflector threw back a dazzling light. I blinked. When I opened my eyes the light was gone and the center of the workshop was empty.

No one moved. Ace frowned over his watch. I stared at the spot where Barbara had stood. I don't think my mind was working; I had the feeling my lungs and heart certainly were not. I was a true spectator, with all faculties save sight and hearing suspended.

". . . on an animal first." Midbin's voice was querulous.

"Oh, God!" muttered Thomas Haggerwells.

Ace said casually — too casually, "The return is automatic. Set beforehand for duration. Thirty more seconds."

Midbin said, "She is . . . this is. . . ." He sat down on a stool and bent his head almost to his knees.

Mr. Haggerwells groaned, "Ace, Ace — you should have stopped her."

Still I couldn't think. Barbara had stood there; then she was gone. What . . . ? Midbin must be right; we had let her go to destruction. Certainly much more than a minute had passed now.

The ring glowed and the brilliant light was reflected. "It did, oh, it did!" Barbara cried. "It did!"

She came out of the circle and kissed Ace, who patted her gently on the back. I suddenly noticed the pain of holding my breath and released a tremendous sigh. Barbara kissed her father and Midbin — who was still shaking his head — and, after the faintest hesitation, me. Her lips were ice-cold.

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The shock of triumph made her voluble. Striding up and down, she spoke with extraordinary rapidity.

When the light flashed, she too involuntarily closed her eyes. She had felt a strange, terrifying weightlessness, an awful disembodiment, for which she had been unprepared. She thought she had not been actually unconscious, even for an instant, though she had the impression of ceasing to exist as a unique collection of memories, and of being somehow dissolved. Then she had opened her eyes.

At first she was shocked to find the barn as it had been all her life, abandoned and dusty. Then she realized she had indeed moved through time; the disappearance of the engines and reflector showed she had gone back to the un-remodelled workshop.

Now she saw the barn was not quite as she had known it, even in her childhood, for while it was unquestionably abandoned, it had evidently not long been so. The thick dust was not so thick as she remembered, the sagging cobwebs not so dense. Straw was still scattered on the floor; it had not yet been entirely carried away by mice or inquisitive nesting birds. Beside the door hung bits of harness beyond repair, some broken bridles, and a faded calendar on which the ink of the numerals 1897 still stood.

The minute she had allotted this first voyage seemed fantastically short and incredibly long. All the paradoxes she had always brushed aside as of no immediate concern now confronted her. Since she had gone back to a time before she was born, she must always have existed as a visitor prior to her own conception; she could presumably be present during her own childhood and growth, and by making a second and third visit, multiply herself as though in facing mirrors, so that an infinite number of Barbara Haggerwells could occupy a single segment of time.

A hundred other parallel speculations raced through her mind without interfering with her rapid and insatiable survey of the commonplace features of the barn, features which could never really be commonplace to her since they proved all her speculations so victoriously right.

Suddenly she shivered with the bitter cold and burst into teeth-chattering laughter. She had made such careful plans to visit the First of January — and had never thought to take along a warm coat.

She looked at her watch; only twenty seconds had passed. The temptation to defy her agreement with Ace not to step outside the tiny circle of HX-1's operating field on the initial experiment was almost irresistible. She longed to touch the fabric of the past, to feel the worn boards of the barn, to handle as well as look. Again her thoughts whirled with speculation; again the petty moment stretched and contracted. She spent eternity and instantaneity at once.

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When the moment of return came, she again experienced the feeling of dissolution, followed immediately by the light. When she opened her eyes she was back.

Midbin, who could not deny Barbara's disappearance for a full minute while we all watched, nevertheless insisted she had suffered some kind of hallucination. He could offer no explanation of her vanishing before our eyes, but insisted that this and her alleged traveling in time were two separate phenomena. Her conviction she had been back to 1900 he attributed to her emotional eccentricity.

The logical answer to this obstinate skepticism was to invite him to see for himself. To Ace, of course, belonged the honor of the second journey; he elected to spend three minutes in 1885, returning to report he had found the barn well occupied by both cattle and fowl, and been scared stiff of discovery when dogs set up a furious barking. He brought back with him a new laid egg 67 years old. Or was it? Trips in time are confusing that way.

Barbara was upset — more than I thought warranted. "We daren't be anything but invisible spectators," she scolded. "The faintest indication of our presence, the slightest impingement on the past may change the whole course of events. We have no way of knowing what actions have no consequences — if there can be any. Goodness knows what your idiocy in removing the egg has done. It's absolutely essential not to betray our presence in any way. Remember this in the future."

The next day Midbin spent five minutes in 1820. The barn had not yet been built, and he found himself in a field of wild hay. The faint snick of scythes, and voices not too far off, indicated mowers. Midbin dropped to the ground. His view of the past was restricted to tall grass and some persistent ants who explored his face and hands until the time was up and he returned with broken spears of ripe hay clinging to his clothes.

I was reminded of Enfandin's, "Why should I believe my eyes?" by Midbin's reaction. He did not deny that a phenomenon had taken place, nor that his experience coincided with Barbara's theories. On the other hand he didn't admit he had actually been transported into the past. "The mind can do anything, anything at all. Create boils and cancers — why not ants and grass? I don't know — I don't know. . . ." And he added abruptly, "No one can help her now."

X

For the next two months Barbara and Ace explored HX-1's possibilities. They quickly learned its limited range which was, subject to slight variations, little more than a century. When they tried to operate beyond this

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range the translation simply didn't take place, though the same feeling of dissolution occurred. When the light faded they were still in the present. Midbin's venture into the hayfield had been a freak, possibly due to peculiar weather conditions at both ends of the journey. They had not known this at the time nor realized that by hazarding this marginal zone the traveler might be lost. They set 1850 as a safe limit.

Nor would HX-1 work in reverse; the future remained closed. Also they discovered that time spent in the past consumed an equal amount of time in the present; they could not return to a point a minute after departure when they had been gone for an hour. As near as I could understand Barbara this was because of the limitations of HX-1: duration was set in the present. In order to come back to a time-point not in correspondence with the period actually spent, another engine — or at least another set of controls — would have to be taken into the past. Even then radical changes would have to be made since HX-1 didn't work for the future.

Within these limits (and another, more inconvenient one: that they couldn't visit the identical past moment twice; there was no possibility of meeting one's time-traveling self) they roamed almost at will. Ace spent a full week in October 1896, walking as far as Philadelphia, enjoying the enthusiasm and fury of the presidential campaign. Knowing President Bryan was not only going to be elected, but would serve three terms, he found it hard indeed to obey Barbara's stricture and not cover confident Whig bets on Major McKinley.

Though both sampled the war years they brought back nothing useful to me — no information or viewpoint I couldn't have got from any of a score of books. Lacking historians' training or interests, their tidbits were those of limited onlookers, not chroniclers.

I grew increasingly fretful. I held long colloquies with myself which invariably ended inconclusively. *Why not?* I asked myself. *Surely this is the unique opportunity. Never before has it been possible for an historian to check back at will, to go over an event as often as he might please, to write of the past with the detachment of the present and the accuracy of an eye-witness knowing specifically what to look for. Why don't you take advantage of HX-1 and see for yourself?*

Against this reasoning I objected—what? Fear? Uneasiness? The superstition that I was tampering with a taboo, with matters forbidden to human limitations? "*You mustn't try any shortcuts. Promise me that, Hodge.*" Well, Catty was a darling. She was my beloved wife, but she was neither scholar nor oracle. Woman's intuition? A respectable phrase, but what did it mean? And didn't Barbara, who first suggested my using HX-1, have womanly intuition also?

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A half-dozen times I started to speak to Catty. Each time I repressed the words. What was the use of upsetting her? *Promise me that, Hodge.* But I had not promised. This was something I had to settle for myself.

What was I afraid of? Because I'd never grasped anything to do with the physical sciences did I attribute some anthropomorphism to their manifestations and, like a savage, fear the spirit imprisoned in what I didn't understand? I had never thought of myself as hidebound, but I was acting like a 90-year-old professor asked to use a typewriter instead of a goose quill.

I recalled Tyss's, "You are the spectator type, Hodgins." And once I had called Tyss out of the depths of my memory I couldn't escape his familiar, sardonic, interminable argument. *Why are you fussing yourself, Hodgins? What is the point of all this introspective debate? Don't you know your choice has already been made? And that you have acted according to that decision an infinite number of times and will do so an infinite number of times again? Relax, Hodgins; you have nothing to worry about. Free-will is an illusion; you cannot alter what you are about to decide under the impression that you have decided.*

My reaction to this imagined interjection was frenzied, unreasonable. I cursed Tyss and his damnable philosophy. I cursed the insidiousness of his reasoning which had planted seed in my brain to sprout at a moment like this. Yet in spite of the violence of my rejection of the words I attributed to Tyss, I accepted one of them. I relaxed. The decision had been made. Not by mechanistic forces, not by blind response to stimulus, but by my own desire.

And now to my aid came the image of Tyss's antithesis, Rene Enfandin. *Be a skeptic, Hodge; he always the skeptic. Prove all things; hold fast to that which is true. Joking Pilate, asking,* What is truth? *was blind — but you can see more aspects of the absolute truth than any man has had a chance to see before. Can you use the chance well, Hodge?*

Once I had answered the imaginary question with a wholehearted affirmative and so buttressed my determination to go, I was faced with the problem of telling Catty. I told myself I could not bear the thought of her anxiety; that she would worry despite the fact others had frequently used HX-1. I was sure she would be sick with apprehension while I was gone. No doubt this was all true, but I also remembered her, *Promise me you won't take any shortcuts, Hodge. . . .*

I finally took the weak, the ineffective course. I said I'd decided the only way to face my problem was to spend four or five days going over the actual field of Gettysburg. Here, I explained, unconvincingly, I thought I might at last come to the conclusion whether to scrap all my work and start afresh, or not.

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She pretended to believe me and begged me to take her along. After all, we had spent our honeymoon on battlefields. I pleaded that her presence would distract me; my thoughts would go out to her rather than the problem. Her look was tragic with understanding.

I dressed in clothes I often used for walking trips, clothes which bore no mark of any fashion and might pass as current wear among the poorer classes in any era of the past hundred years. I put a packet of dried beef in my pocket and started for the workshop.

As soon as I left the cottage I laughed at my hyper-sensitivity, at all the to-do I'd made over lying to Catty. This was but the first excursion; I planned many more. There was no reason why she shouldn't accompany me on them. I grew lighthearted as my conscience eased and I even congratulated myself on my skill in not having told a single technical falsehood to Catty. I began to whistle — never a habit of mine — as I made my way along the path to the workshop.

Barbara was alone. Her ginger hair gleamed in the light of a gas globe; her eyes were green as they were when she was exultant. "Well, Hodge?"

"Well, Barbara, I . . ."

"Have you told Catty?"

"Not exactly. How did you know?"

"I knew before you did, Hodge. All right. How long do you want to stay?"

"Four days."

"That's long for a first trip. Don't you think you'd better try a few sample minutes?"

"Why? I've seen you and Ace go often enough and heard your accounts. I'll take care of myself. Have you got it down fine enough yet so you can pick the hour of arrival?"

"Hour and minute," she answered confidently. "What'll it be?"

"About midnight of June 30, 1863," I answered. "I want to come back on the night of July Fourth."

"You'll have to be more exact than that. For the return, I mean. The dials are set on seconds."

"All right, make it midnight going and coming then."

"Have you a watch that keeps perfect time?"

"Well, I don't know about perfect —"

"Take this one. It's synchronized with the master control clock." She handed me a large, rather awkward timepiece, which had two independent faces side by side. "We had two made like this; the two dials were useful before we were able to control HX-1 so exactly. One shows 1952 Haggershaven time."

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"Ten thirty-three and fourteen seconds," I said.

"Yes. The other will show 1863 time. You won't be able to reset the first dial — but for goodness sake remember to keep it wound — and set the second for . . . 11:54, zero. That means in six minutes you'll leave — to arrive at midnight. Remember to keep that one wound too, for you'll go by that regardless of variations in local clocks. Whatever else happens, be in the center of the barn at midnight — allow yourself some leeway — by midnight, July Fourth. I don't want to have to go wandering around 1863 looking for you."

"You won't have to. I'll be here."

"Five minutes. Now then, food."

"I have some," I answered, slapping my pocket.

"Not enough. Take this concentrated chocolate along. I suppose it won't hurt to drink the water if you're not observed, but avoid their food. One never knows what chain might be begun by the casual theft (or purchase, if you had an old enough coin) of a loaf of bread. The possibilities are limitless. Listen! How can I impress on you the importance of doing nothing that could possibly change the future — our present? I'm sure to this day Ace doesn't understand it, and I tremble every moment he spends in the past. The most trivial action may start a series of disastrous consequences. Don't be seen, don't be heard. Make your trip as a ghost."

"Barbara, I promise I'll neither assassinate General Lee nor give the North the idea of a modern six-barreled cannon."

"Four minutes. It's not a joke, Hodge."

"Believe me," I said, "I understand."

She looked at me searchingly. Then she shook her head and began making her round of the engines, adjusting the dials. I slid under the glass ring as I'd so often seen her do and stood casually under the reflector. I was not in the least nervous. I don't think I was even particularly excited.

"Three minutes," said Barbara.

I patted my breast pocket. Notebook, pencils. I nodded.

She ducked under the ring and came toward me. "Hodge . . ."

"Yes?"

She put her arms on my shoulders, leaning forward. I kissed her, a little absently. "Clod!"

I looked at her closely, but there were none of the familiar signs of anger. "A minute to go, it says here," I told her.

She drew away and went back. "All set. Ready?"

"Ready," I answered cheerfully. "See you midnight, July Fourth, 1863."

"Right. Goodbye, Hodge. Glad you didn't tell Catty."

The expression on her face was the strangest I'd ever seen her wear. I

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could not, then or now, quite interpret it. Doubt, malice, suffering, vindictiveness, love, were all there as her hand moved the switch. I began to answer something — perhaps to bid her wait — then the light made me blink and I too experienced the shattering feeling of transition. My bones seemed to fly from each other; every cell in my body exploded to the ends of space.

The instant of translation was so brief it is hard to believe all the multitude of impressions occurred simultaneously. I was sure my veins were drained of blood, my brain and eyeballs dropped into a bottomless void, my thoughts pressed to the finest powder and blown a universe away. Most of all, I knew the awful sensation of being, for that tiny fragment of time, not Hodgins McCormick Backmaker, but part of an *I* in which the I that was me merged all identity.

Then I opened my eyes. I was emotionally shaken; my knees and wrists were watery points of helplessness, but I was alive and functioning — with my individuality unimpaired. The light had vanished. I was in darkness save for faint moonlight coming through the cracks in the barn. The sweetish smell of cattle was in my nostrils, and the slow, ponderous stamp of hooves in my ears. I had gone back through time.

XI

The barking of the dogs was frenzied, filled with the hoarse note indicating they had been raising the alarm for long without being heeded. I knew they must have been barking at the alien smells of soldiers for the past day, so I was not apprehensive their scent of me would bring investigation. How Barbara and Ace had escaped detection on journeys which didn't coincide with abnormal events was beyond me; with such an unnerving racket in prospect I would either have given up the trips or moved the apparatus.

Strange, I reflected, that the cows and horses were undisturbed. That no hysterical chicken leaped from the roost in panic. Only the dogs scented my unnatural presence. Dogs, who are supposed to sense things beyond the perceptions of man.

Warily I picked my way past the livestock and out of the barn, fervently hoping the dogs were tied for I had no mind to start my adventure by being bitten. Barbara's warnings seemed inadequate indeed; one would think she or Ace would have devised some method of neutralizing the infernal barking.

Once out on the familiar Hanover road every petty feeling of doubt or distress fell away and all the latent excitement took hold of me. I was glori-

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ously in 1863, half a day and some 30 miles from the battle of Gettysburg. If there is a paradise for historians I had achieved it without the annoyance of dying first. I swung along at a good pace, thankful I had trained myself for long tramps, so that 30 miles in less than ten hours was no monstrous feat. The noise of the dogs died away behind me and I breathed the night air joyfully.

I had already decided I dare not attempt to steal a ride on the railroad, even supposing the cars were going through. As I turned off the Hanover road and took the direct one to Gettysburg, I knew I would not be able to keep on it for long. Part of Early's Confederate division was marching along it from recently occupied York; Stuart's cavalry was all around; trifling skirmishes were being fought on or near it; Union troops, regulars as well as the militia called out by Governor Curtin for the emergency, were behind and ahead of me, marching for the Monocacy and Cemetery Ridge.

Leaving the highway would hardly slow me down, for I knew every side-road, lane, path or shortcut, not only as they existed in my day, but as they had been in the time where I was now. I was going to need this knowledge even more on my return, for on the Fourth of July this road, like every other, would be glutted with beaten Northern troops — supplies and wounded left behind — frantically trying to reorganize as they were harassed by Stuart's cavalry and pressed by the victorious men of Hill, Longstreet, and Ewell. It was with this in mind I had allowed disproportionately longer for coming back.

I saw my first soldiers a few miles further on, a jagged shadow sitting by the roadside with his boots off, massaging his feet. I guessed him Northern from his kepi, but this was not conclusive, for many Southron regiments wore kepis also. I struck off quietly into the field and skirted around him. He never looked up.

At dawn I estimated I was halfway, and except for that single sight of a soldier I might have been taking a nocturnal stroll through a countryside at peace. I was tired but certainly not worn out, and I knew I could count on nervous energy and happy excitement to keep me going long after my muscles began to protest. Progress would be slower from now on — Confederate infantry must be just ahead — but even so, I should be at Gettysburg by six or seven.

The sudden drumming of hooves brushed me off the dusty pike and petrified me into rigidity as a troop dressed in gray and dirty tan galloped by screaming "Eeeeee-yeeee" exultantly. It would be the sideroads from now, I decided.

But others had the same impulse; the sideroads were well populated.

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Although I knew the movement of every division and of many regiments, and even had some considerable idea of the civilian dislocation, the picture around me was confused and chaotic. Farmers, merchants, workers in overalls rode or tramped eastward; others, identical in dress and obvious intensity of effort, pushed westward. I passed carriages and carts with women and children traveling at various speeds both ways. Squads and companies of blue clad troops marched along the roads or through the fields, trampling the crops, a confused sound of singing, swearing, or aimless talk hanging above them like a fog. Spaced by pacific intervals, men in gray or butternut, otherwise indistinguishable, marched in the same direction. I decided I could pass unnoticed in the milling crowds.

It is not easy for the historian, ten, 50 or 500 years away from an event, to put aside for a moment the large concepts of currents and forces, or the mechanical aids of statistics, charts, maps, neat plans and diagrams in which the migration of men, women and children is indicated by an arrow, or a brigade of half-terrified, half-heroic men becomes a neat little rectangle. It is not easy to see behind source material, to visualize state papers, reports, letters, diaries as written by men who spent most of their lives sleeping, eating, yawning, eliminating, squeezing blackheads, lusting, looking out of windows, or talking about nothing in general with no one in particular. We are too impressed with the pattern revealed to us — or which we think has been revealed to us — to remember that for the participants history is a haphazard affair, apparently aimless, produced by human beings whose concern is essentially with the trivial and irrelevent. The historian is always conscious of destiny. The participants rarely — or mistakenly.

So to be set down in the midst of crisis, to be at once involved and apart, is to experience a constant series of shocks against which there is no anesthetic. The soldiers, the stragglers, the refugees, the farm boys shouting at horses, the tophatted gentlemen cursing the teamsters, the teamsters cursing back; the looters, pimps, gamblers, whores, nurses and newspapermen were indisputably what they appeared: vitally important to themselves, of little interest to anyone else. Yet at the same time they were a paragraph, a page, a chapter, a whole series of volumes.

I'm sure I was faithful to the spirit if not the letter of Barbara's warnings, and that none of the hundreds whom I passed or who passed me noted my presence. I, on the other hand, had to repress the constant temptation to peer into every face for signs which could not tell me what fortune or misfortune the decision of the next three days would bring to it.

A few miles from town the crowded confusion became even worse, for the scouts from Ewell's Corps, guarding the Confederate left flank on the

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York Road, acted like a cork in a bottle. Because I, unlike the other travelers, knew this, I cut sharply south to get back on the circuitous Hanover road I had left shortly after midnight, and crossing the bridge over Rock Creek, stumbled into Gettysburg.

The two and a half storey brick houses with their purplish slate roofs were placid and charming in the hot July sun. A valiant rooster pecked at horsedung in the middle of the street, heedless of the swarming soldiers, any of whom might take a notion for roast chicken. Privates in the black hats of the Army of the Potomac, cavalrymen with wide yellow stripes and cannoneers with red ones on the seams of their pants, swaggered importantly. Lieutenants with hands resting gracefully on sword hilts, captains with arms thrust in unbuttoned tunics, colonels smoking cigars, generals on horseback, all moved back and forth across the street, out of and into houses and stores, each clearly intent on some business which would affect the course of the war. Soldiers spat, leered at an occasional woman, sat dolefully on handy stoops, or marched smartly toward an unknown destination. On the courthouse staff the flag hung doubtfully in the limp summer air. Every so often there was a noise like poorly organized thunder.

Imitating the adaptable infantrymen, I found an unoccupied stoop and sat down, after a curious glance at the house, wondering whether it contained someone whose letters or diaries I had read. Drawing out my packet of dried beef, I munched away without taking any of my attention from the sights and sounds and smells around me. Only I knew how desperately these soldiers would fight this afternoon and all day tomorrow. I alone knew how they would be caught in the inescapable trap on July Third and finally routed, to begin the last act of the war. That major, I thought, so proud of his new-won golden oak leaves, may have an arm or leg shot off vainly defending Culp's Hill; that sergeant over there may lie faceless under an apple tree before nightfall.

Soon these men would be swept away from the illusory shelter of the houses and out onto the ridges where they would be pounded into defeat and rout. There was nothing for me now in Gettysburg itself — though I could have spent days absorbing the color and feeling. Already I had tempted fate by my casual appearance in the heart of town. At any moment someone might speak to me; an ill considered word or action of mine might change, with ever-widening consequences, the course of the future. I had been foolish enough and long enough; it was time for me to go to the vantage point I had decided upon and observe without peril of being observed.

I rose and stretched, my bones protesting. But a couple of miles more would see me clear of all danger of chance encounter with a too friendly or

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inquisitive soldier or civilian. I gave a last look, endeavoring to impress every detail on my memory, and turned south on the Emmitsburg Road.

This was no haphazard choice. I knew where and when the crucial, the decisive move upon which all the other moves depended would take place. While thousands of men were struggling and dying on other parts of the field, a Confederate advance force, unnoticed, disregarded, would occupy the position which would eventually dominate the field and win the battle — and the war — for the South. Heavy with knowledge no one else possessed I made my way toward a farm on which there was a field and a peach orchard.

A great battle in its first stages is as tentative, uncertain and indefinite as a courtship just begun. At the beginning the ground was there for either side to take without protest; the other felt no surge of possessive jealousy. I walked unscathed along the Emmitsburg Road; on my left I knew there were Union forces concealed, on my right the Southrons maneuvered. In a few hours, to walk between the lines would mean instant death, but now the declaration had not been made, the vows had not been finally exchanged. It was still possible for either party to withdraw; no furious heat bound the two indissolubly together. I heard the occasional shell and the whine of a minie bullet; mere flirtatious gestures so far.

Despite the hot sun the grass was cool and lush. The shade in the orchard was velvety. From a low branch I picked a near ripe peach and sucked the wry juice. I sprawled on the ground and waited. For miles around, men from Maine and Wisconsin, from Georgia and North Carolina, assumed the same attitude. But I knew for what I was waiting; they could only guess.

Some acoustical freak dimmed the noises in the air to little more than amplification of the normal summer sounds. Did the ground really tremble faintly, or was I translating my mental picture of the marching armies, the great wagon trains, the heavy cannon, the iron-shod horses into an imagined physical effect? I don't think I dozed, but certainly my attention withdrew from the rows of trees with their runneled and scarred bark, curving branches and graceful leaves, so that I was taken unaware by the unmistakable clump and creak of mounted men.

The blue uniformed cavalry rode slowly through the peach orchard. They seemed like a group of aimless hunters returning from the futile pursuit of a fox; they chatted, shouted at each other, walked their horses abstractedly. One or two had their sabres out; they cut at the branches overhead and alongside in pure, pointless mischief.

Behind them came the infantrymen, sweating and swearing, more serious. Some few had wounds, others were without their muskets. Their

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dark blue tunics were carelessly unbuttoned, their lighter pants were stained with mud and dust and grass. They trampled and thrashed around like men long tired out. Quarrels rose among them swiftly and swiftly petered out. No one could mistake them for anything but troops in retreat.

After they had passed, the orchard was still again, but the stillness had a different quality from that which had gone before. The leaves did not rustle, no birds chirped, there were no faint betrayals of the presence of chipmunks or squirrels. Only if one listened very closely was the dry noise of insects perceptible. But I heard the guns now. Clearly, and louder. And more continuously — much more continuously. It was not yet the roar of battle, but death was unmistable in its low rumble.

Then the Confederates came. Cautiously, but not so cautiously that one could fail to recognize they represented a victorious, invading army. Shabby they certainly were, as they pushed into the orchard, but alert and confident. Only a minority had uniforms which resembled those prescribed by regulation and these were torn, stained and scuffed. Many of the others wore the semi-official butternut — crudely dyed homespun, streaked and muddy brown. Some had ordinary clothes with military hats and buttons; a few were dressed in federal blue pants with gray or butternut jackets.

Nor were their weapons uniform. There were long rifles, short carbines, muskets of varying age, and I noticed one bearded soldier with a ponderous shotgun. But whatever their dress or arms, their bearing was the bearing of conquerors. If I alone on the field that day knew for sure the outcome of the battle, these Confederate soldiers were close behind in sensing the future.

The straggling Northerners had passed me by with the clouded perception of the retreating. These Southrons, however, were steadfastly attentive to every sight and sound. Too late I realized the difficulty of remaining unnoticed by such sharp, experienced eyes. Even as I berated myself for my stupidity, a great, whiskery fellow in what must once have been a stylish bottle-green coat pointed his gun at me.

"Yank here boys!" Then to me, "What you doing here, fella?"

Three or four came up and surrounded me curiously. "Funniest lookin' damyank I ever did see. Looks like he just fell out of a bathtub."

Since I had walked all night on dusty roads I could only think their standards of cleanliness were not high. And, indeed, this was confirmed by the smell coming from them: the stink of sweat, of clothes long slept in, of unwashed feet and stale tobacoo.

"I'm a noncombatant," I said foolishly.

"Whazzat?" asked the beard. "Some kind of Baptist?"

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"Let's see your boots, Yank. Mine's sure wore out."

What terrified me now was not the thought of my boots being stolen, or of being treated as a prisoner, or even the remote chance I might be shot as a spy. A greater, more indefinite catastrophe was threatened by my exposure. These men were the advance company of a regiment due to sweep through the orchard and the wheatfield, explore that bit of wild ground known as the Devil's Den and climb up Little Round Top closely followed by an entire Confederate brigade. This was the brigade which held the Round Tops for several hours until artillery was brought up — artillery which dominated the entire field and gave the South its victory at Gettysburg.

There was no allowance for a pause, no matter how trifling, in the peach orchard, in any of the accounts I had ever read or heard of. The hazard Barbara had warned so insistently against had happened. I had been discovered, and the mere discovery had altered the course of history.

I tried to shrug it off. The delay of a few minutes could hardly make a significant difference. All historians agreed the capture of the Round Tops was an inevitability; the Confederates would have been foolish to overlook them — in fact, it was hardly possible they could, prominent as they were, both on maps and in physical reality — and they had occupied them hours before the Federals made a belated attempt to take them. I had been unbelievably stupid to expose myself, but I had created no repercussions likely to spread beyond the next few minutes.

"Said let's see them boots. Ain't got all day to wait."

A tall officer with a pointed imperial and a sandy, faintly reddish mustache whose curling ends shone waxily came up, revolver in hand. "What's going on here?"

"Just a Yank, Cap'n. Making a little change of footgear." The tone was surly, almost insolent.

The galloons on the officer's sleeve told me the title was not honorary. "I'm a civilian, Captain," I protested. "I realize I have no business here."

The captain looked at me coldly, with an expression of disdainful contempt. "Local man?" he asked.

"Not exactly. I'm from York."

"Too bad. Thought you could tell me about the Yanks up ahead. Jenks, leave the civilian gentleman in full possession of his boots." There was rage behind that sneer, a hateful anger apparently directed at me for being a civilian, at his men for their obvious lack of respect, at the battle, the world. I suddenly realized his face was intimately familiar. Irritatingly, because I could connect it with no name, place or circumstance.

"How long have you been in this orchard, Mister Civilian-From-York?"

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The effort to identify him nagged me, working in the depths of my mind, obtruding even into that top layer which was concerned with what was going on.

What was going on? *Too bad. Thought you could tell me about the Yanks up ahead. How long have you been in this orchard?*

Yanks up ahead? There weren't any.

"I said, 'How long you been in this orchard?'"

Probably an officer later promoted to rank prominent enough to have his picture in one of the minor narratives. Yet I was certain his face was no likeness I'd seen once in a steel engraving and dismissed. These were features often encountered. . . .

"Sure like to have them boots. If we ain't fightin' for Yankee boots, what the hell we fightin' for?"

What could I say? That I'd been in the orchard for half an hour? The next question was bound to be, Had I seen Federal troops? Whichever way I answered I would be betraying my role of spectator.

"Hay Cap'n — this fella knows something. Lookit the silly grin!"

Was I smiling? In what? Terror? Perplexity? In the mere effort of keeping silent, so as to be involved no further?

"Tell yah — he's laughin' ,cuz he knows somethin'!"

Let them hang me, let them strip me of my boots; from here on I was dumb as dear Catty had been once.

"Out with it man — you're in a tight spot. Are there Yanks up ahead?"

The confusion in my mind approached chaos. If I knew the captain's eventual rank I could place him. Colonel Soandso. Brigadier-General Blank. What had happened? Why had I let myself be discovered? Why had I spoken at all and made silence so hard now?

"Yanks up ahead — they's Yanks up ahead!"

"Quiet you! I asked him — he didn't say there were Yanks ahead."

"Hay! Damyanks up above. Goin' to mow us down!"

"Fella says the bluebellies are layin fur us!"

Had the lie been in my mind, to be telepathically plucked by the excited soldier? Was even silence no refuge from participation?

"Man here spotted the whole Fed artillery up above, trained on us!"

"Pull back, boys! Pull back!"

I'd read often enough of the epidemic quality of a perfectly unreasonable notion. A misunderstood word, a baseless rumor, an impossible report, was often enough to set a group of armed men — squad or army — into senseless mob action. Sometimes the infection made for feats of heroism, sometimes for panic. This was certainly less than panic, but my nervous, meaningless smile conveyed a message I had never sent.

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"It's a trap. Pull back boys — let's get away from these trees and out where we can see the Yanks!"

The captain whirled on his men. "Here, damn you," he shouted furiously, "you all gone crazy? The man said nothing. There's no trap!"

The men moved slowly, sullenly away. "I heard him," one of them muttered, looking accusingly toward me.

The captain's shout became a yell. "Come back here! Back here, I say!"

His raging stride overtook the still irresolute men. He grabbed the one called Jenks by the shoulder and whirled him about. Jenks tried to jerk free. There was fear on his face, and hate. "Leave me go, damn you," he screamed, "Leave me go!"

The captain yelled at his men again. Jenks grabbed at the pistol with his left hand; the officer pulled the gun away. Jenks brought his musket upright against the captain's body, the muzzle just under his chin, and pushed — as though the firearm somehow gave him leverage. They wrestled briefly, then the musket went off.

The captain's hat flew upward, and for an instant he stood, bareheaded, in the private's embrace. Then he fell. Jenks wrenched his musket free and disappeared.

When I came out of my shock I walked over to the body. The face had been blown off. Shreds of human meat dribbled bloodily on the gray collar and soiled the fashionably long hair. I had killed a man. Through my interference with the past I had killed a man who had been destined to longer life and even some measure of fame. I was the guilty sorcerer's apprentice.

I stooped down to put my hands inside his coat for papers which would tell me who he was and satisfy the curiosity which still basely persisted. It was not shame which stopped me. Just nausea, and remorse.

I saw the Battle of Gettysburg. I saw it with all the unique advantages of a professional historian throughly conversant with the patterns, the movements, the details, who knows where to look for the coming dramatic moment, the recorded decisive stroke. I fulfilled the chroniclers' dream.

It was a nightmare.

To begin with, I slept. I slept not far from the captain's body in the peach orchard. This was not callousness, but physical and emotional exhaustion. When I went to sleep the guns were thundering; when I woke they were thundering louder. It was late afternoon. I thought immediately, this is the time for the futile Union charge against the Round Tops.

But the guns were not sounding from there. All the roar was northward, from the town. I knew how the battle went; I had studied it for years. Only now it wasn't happening the way it was written down in the books.

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True, the first day was a Confederate victory. But it was not the victory we knew. It was just a little different, just a little short of the triumph recorded. And on the second day, instead of the Confederates getting astride the Taneytown Road and into the position from which they tore Meade's army to bits from three sides, I witnessed a terrible encounter in the peach orchard and the wheatfield — places known to be safely behind the Southron lines.

All my life I'd heard of Pickett's charge on the third day. Of how the disorganized Federals were given the final killing blow in their vitals. Well, I saw Pickett's charge on the third day and it was not the same charge in the historic place. It was a futile attempt to storm superior positions (positions, by established fact, in Lee's hands since July First) ending in slaughter and defeat.

All because the North held the Round Tops.

I cannot tell you how I got back to York. If I walked, it was somnambulistically. Possibly I rode the railroad or in a farmer's cart. Part of my mind — a tiny part that kept coming back to pierce me no matter how often I crushed it out — remembered those who died, those who would have lived, but for me. Another part was concerned only with the longing to get back to my own time, to the haven, to Catty. A much larger part was simply blank, except for the awesome, incredible knowledge that the past could be changed — that the past *had* been changed.

I must have wound my watch — Barbara's watch — for it was 10 o'clock on the night of July Fourth when I got to the barn. Ten o'clock by 1863 time; the other dial showed it to be 8:40 — that would be twenty of nine in the morning — 1952 time. In two hours I would be home, safe from the nightmare of happenings that never happened, of guilt for the deaths of men not supposed to die, of the awful responsibility of playing destiny. If I could not persuade Barbara to smash her damnable contrivance I would do so myself.

The dogs barked furiously, but I was sure no one heeded. It was the Fourth of July, and a day of victory and rejoicing for all Pennsylvanians. I stole into the barn and settled myself in the exact center, even daring the use of a match — my last one — to be sure I'd be directly under the reflector when it materialized.

I could not sleep, though I longed to blot out the horror and wake in my own time. Detail by detail I went over what I had seen, superimposing it like a palimpsest upon the history I'd always known. Sleep would have kept me from this wretched compulsion and from questioning my sanity, but I could not sleep.

I have heard that in moments of overwhelming shock some irrelevancy,

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some inconsequential matter persistently forces itself on the attention. The criminal facing execution thinks, not of his imminent fate or of his crime, but of the cigarette stub he left burning in his cell. The bereaved widow dwells, not on her lost husband, but on tomorrow's laundry. So it was with me. Behind that part of my mind re-living the last three days, a more elementary part gnawed at the identification of the slain captain.

I knew that face. Particularly did I know that face set in a sneer, distorted with anger. But I could not remember it in Confederate uniform. I could not remember it with sandy mustaches. And yet the sandy hair, revealed in that terrible moment when his hat flew off, was as familiar as part of the face. Oh, I thought, if I could only place it once and for all and free my mind at least of this trivial thing.

I wished there were some way I could have seen the watch, to concentrate on the creeping progress of the hands and distract myself from the wave after wave of wretched meditations which flowed over me. But the moonlight was not strong enough to make the face distinguishable, much less the figures on the dials. There was no narcotic.

As one always is at such times I was convinced the appointed moment had passed unnoticed. Something had gone wrong. Over and over I had to tell myself that minutes seem hours in the waiting dark; it might feel like 2 or 3 in the morning to me; it was probably barely 11. No use. A minute — or an hour or a second — later I was again positive midnight had passed.

Finally I began to suffer a monstrous illusion. I began to think it was getting lighter. That dawn was coming. Of course, I knew it could not be; what I fancied lifting darkness was only a sick condition of swollen, overtired eyes. Dawn does not come to Pennsylvania at midnight, and it was not yet midnight. At midnight I would be back at Haggershaven, in 1952.

Even when the barn was fully lighted by the rising sun and I could see the cattle peaceful in their stalls I refused to believe what I saw. I took out my watch only to find that something had disturbed the works; the hands registered 5 o'clock. Even when the farmer, milk pails over arm, started in surprise, exclaiming, "Hay, what you doing here?" — even then, I did not believe.

Only when, as I opened my mouth to explain to my involuntary host, did something happen. The puzzle which had pursued me for three days suddenly solved itself. I knew why the face of the Southron captain had been so familiar. Familiar beyond any of the better known warriors on either side. I had indeed known that face intimately; seen those features enraged or sneering. The nose, the mouth, the eyes, the expression were Barbara Haggerwells'. The man dead in the peach orchard was the man whose portrait hung in the library of Haggershaven, its founder, Herbert

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Haggerwells. Captain Haggerwells — never to become a major now, or buy this farm. Never to marry a local girl or beget Barbara's great grandfather. Haggershaven had ceased to exist in the future.

XII

I am writing this, as I said, in 1877. I am a healthy man of 45, no doubt with many years ahead of me. I might live to be 100, except for the illogical feeling I must die before 1921. However, 89 should be enough for anyone. So I have time to put my story down. Still, better to have it down and done with; should anything happen to me tomorrow it will be on paper.

For what? As confession and apology? As an inverted substitute for the merciful amnesia which ought to have erased my memory as well as my biography? (I have written to Wappinger Falls; there are no records of any Hodgins family, or of Backmakers. Does this mean that the forces I set in motion destroyed Private Hodgins as well as Captain Haggerwells? Or only that the Hodginses and Backmakers settled elsewhere? In either case I am like Adam — in this world — a special, parentless creation.) There is no one close enough to care, or intimate enough to accept my word in the face of all reason. I have not married in this time, nor shall I. I write only as old men talk to themselves.

The rest of my personal story is simple. The name of the farmer who found me in his barn was Thammis; they had need of a hired hand and I stayed on. I had no desire to go elsewhere. I have continued to stay; their son runs the place now. I shall stay till I die.

Catty. Haggershaven. Are they really gone, irrevocably lost, in a future which never existed, which couldn't exist, once the chain of causation was disturbed? Or do they exist, after all, in a universe in which the South won the battle of Gettysburg and Major Haggerwells founded Haggershaven? Could another Barbara devise a means to reach that universe? I would give so much to believe this, but I cannot. I simply cannot.

Children know about such things. They close their eyes and pray, "Please God, make it didn't happen." Often they open their eyes to find it happened anyway, but this does not shake their faith that many times the prayer is granted. Adults smile, but can any of them be sure the memories they cherish were the same yesterday? Do they *know* that a past cannot be expunged? Children know it can. And once lost, that particular past can never be regained. Another and another, perhaps, but never the same one. There are no parallel universes — though this one may be sinuous and inconstant.

That this world is a better place than the one into which I was born, and

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promises to grow still better, seems true. What idealism lay behind the Southron cause triumphed in the reconciliation of men like Lee; what was brutal never got the upper hand as it did in my world. The Negro is free; black legislatures pass advanced laws in South Carolina; black congressmen comport themselves with dignity in Washington.

There are rumors of a deal between northern Republicans and southern Democrats, betraying the victory of the Civil War — how strange it is still, after fourteen years, to use this term instead of the familiar War of Southron Independence — in return for the presidency. If this is true, my brave new world is not so brave.

It may not be so new either. Prussia has beaten France and proclaimed a German Empire; is this the start in a different way of the German Union? Will 1914 see an Emperors' War leaving Germany facing — whom?

Any one of the inventions of my own time would make me a rich man if I could reproduce them — or cared for money. With mounting steel production and the pouring in of immigrants, what a success the minibile would be. Or the tinugraph. Or controllable balloons.

The typewriter I have seen. It has developed along slightly different lines; inevitably, I suppose, given initial divergence. It may mean greater advances; more likely not. The universal use of gaslight must be far in the future if it is to come at all; certainly its advent is delayed by all this talk of inventing electric illumination. If we couldn't put electricity to work it's unlikely my new contemporaries will be able to. Why, they haven't even made the telegraph cheap and convenient.

And something like HX-1? It is inconceivable. Could it be that in destroying the future in which Haggershaven existed, I have also destroyed the only dimension in which time travel was possible?

So strangely easily I can write the words, "I destroyed."

Catty.

But what of Tyss's philosophy? Is it possible I shall be condemned to repeat the destruction throughout eternity? Have I written these lines an infinite number of times before? Or is the mercy envisaged by Enfandin a reality? And what of Barbara's expression as she bade me goodbye? Could she possibly . . .

Editorial note by Frederick Winter Thammis: Quite recently, in the summer of 1953, to be exact, I commissioned the remodelling of my family home near York, Pennsylvania. Among the bundles of old books and papers stored in the attic was a box of personal effects, labelled "H. M. Backmaker." In it was the manuscript concluding with an unfinished sentence, reproduced above.

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My father used to tell me that when he was a boy there was an old man living on the farm, nominally as a hired hand, but actually as a pensioner, since he was beyond the age of useful labor. My father said the children considered him not quite right in his mind, but very entertaining, for he often repeated long, disjointed narratives of an impossible world and an impossible society which they found as fascinating as the Oz books. On looking back, he said, Old Hodge talked like an educated man, but this might simply be the impression of young, unaccustomed minds.

Clearly it was in some attempt to give form and unity to his tales that the old man wrote his fable down, and then was too shy to submit it for publication. This is the only reasonable way to account for its existence. Of course he says he wrote it in 1877, when he was far from old, and disconcertingly, analysis of the paper shows it might have been written then.

Two other items should be noted. In the box of Backmaker's belongings there was a watch of unknown manufacture and unique design. Housed in a cheap nickel case, the jeweled movement is of extraordinary precision and delicacy. The face has two dials, independently set and wound.

The second is a quotation. It can be matched by similar quotations in any of half a hundred volumes on the Civil War. I pick this only because it is recent and handy. From W. E. Woodward's *Years of Madness*, p. 202: ". . . Union troops that night and next morning took a position on Cemetery Hill and Round Top . . . The Confederates could have occupied this position but they failed to do so. It was an error with momentous consequences."

THREE RECIPES FOR PLETOID SOUP

II

Take: a rhyzum pod and one mute pletoid,
(Caution: Use the fresh, not hydroponic)
Activate the hexagram, but *not* the rhomboid,
And set the mixture out till catatonic.

Now melt; each sone will seem to greel . . .
Its best to simply let it.
Then taste; be careful not to spill;
If good, forget it.

LEONARD WOLF

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"Bem"

THE THING, SAM WILSON mused, was so ugly it was funny. He tried to decide which was more grotesque — the many-tentacled, many-eyed creature which approached him, or the silly-looking little ship from which it had alighted.

From somewhere in its fluid, undulating form, the thing spoke fairly good English in a high-pitched, girlish voice. "Where is your . . . er . . . your Boss?" it said.

Grinning, Wilson waved a hand to indicate the spaceport and environs. "If you mean who runs this shebang, I do. What's on your mind?"

The creature drew itself up arrogantly. "Consider yourself my prisoner," it squeaked. "And, lead me to the maidens or I shall blow you to —"

"— smithereens?" Wilson suggested.

"Exactly. Thank you."

Wilson grinned again and flopped down on the bench below the control tower. "Go away," he said. "You aren't for real."

The visitor bristled visibly. "I am very real, Earthman, and I will not be put off! I *know!*"

Wilson's grin grew into a chuckle. "You know?"

"Yes." The voice became almost wrathful. "Now I know why my classmates were so willing to take on lonely patrol duty! They were coming here, secretly, taking lovely Earth maidens for mates!"

Wilson's howl of laughter echoed across the spaceport. "I'll be damned!" he exploded. "A Bem! In the . . . uh . . . flesh!"

The creature paused uncertainly. "A . . . *bem?*"

"Yeah, sure — you know. B. E. M. for Bug-Eyed-Monster. Very dangerous."

The many heads waved knowingly, proudly. "Oh. Yes, of course. In your fear of us, you would undoubtedly use such a term. But come — lead me to the maidens in their silks and satins, or prepare to die!"

Wilson made an irreverent noise.

"You die!" the girlish voice screamed.

Wilson sighed, touched a stud on his belt, and locked the visitor in a force-field. "Calm down, Bem," he said.

The creature writhed in its invisible bonds. "It is a trick!" it screamed. "You are weak, you Earthmen! I have seen it many times, on your space-casts! My fellows come here and snatch away your females at will! You are helpless to resist!"

Wilson checked his laughter with difficulty. "Chum," he said, "I don't know what kind of space-drive you've got in that thing, but somebody better tell you about light-years. That stuff you saw was old Earth TV — centuries old. Buck Rogers stuff."

The Bem stopped thrashing. "Buck Rogers?"

"Sure," Wilson said, "Mythology — phony — not for real."

"You are . . . *not* helpless?"

Wilson grinned.

The thin, reedy voice became plaintive. "And the maiden . . . I do not get?"

"Not this trip, Buster."

Slowly, the many mouths ceased their drooling. A collective sigh escaped the collective lips.

"Now," Wilson said briskly, "let's get down to business. Got some wonderful ashtrays and scenic solar maps here. Nice souvenirs to take back — show the folks where you've been."

— CHARLES T. WEBB

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Recommended Reading

by THE EDITORS

MANY of the ablest writers of imaginative fiction have also distinguished themselves as editors and critics in the field. With the publication of TIMELESS STORIES FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW (Bantam) Ray Bradbury joins the impressive company that includes such names as Campbell, Derleth, Gold, Heinlein, Merril, Pratt and Sayers — to name but a few and those alphabetically. Even more than any of his fellows, Bradbury has done a controversial job. All editors of anthologies face bitter argument over their choices but we think the inclusions of no anthologist will ever be challenged so virulently or defended so passionately as this result of Bradbury's research. For his research has been thorough and extensive and he has carefully examined for stray fantasies many media not usually identified with the publication of this form of fiction. Which splendid virtue may also be responsible for some of the collection's faults; in his strict avoidance of standard sources, Bradbury has selected many stories whose fantasy content is, to say the least, debatable. Still, his book adds up to a lot of unusual and pleasant reading, is a superb bargain (108,000 words for 35¢), and those who disagree with him most loudly must admit that Bradbury the editor, like Bradbury the writer, is not of common mold.

Of much less debatable appeal are the short stories, admirably written but fully fleshed as narratives, which Geoffrey Household has assembled in his TALES OF ADVENTURERS (Atlantic-Little, Brown). Most of these thirteen stories are devoted to crime and espionage, but readers of F&SF will be grateful to Mr. Household for including two fantasies, subtle in concept but vigorous in story-telling, *Debt of Honor* and *The Pejemuller*.

Cyril Judd, as most readers are aware, is the pseudonym of two of our favorite authors: Cyril M. Kornbluth and Judith Merril. Collaboration is (as who knows better than we?) a mysterious relationship, offering many of the problems and few of the rewards of marriage; it's difficult to analyze why the Kornbluth-Merril product adds up to a little less than either author is capable of separately. OUTPOST MARS (Abelard; serialized as MARS CHILD) is a trifle slow, a bit unsubtle in its characterizations and plotting; but despite these flaws it does proffer virtues worthy of its authors: a detailedly convincing study of the problems of a coöperative colony on Mars; a startling genetic theory, planted with the plausibility and cumulative surprise of a good de-

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tective story; and above all, the immediacy of impact which comes from placing small-scale personal problems of the near future ahead of the mind-whirling vastnesses of the Hypergalactic Tenth Millennium.

John Taine's THE CRYSTAL HORDE (Fantasy Press), though written by a single author, sounds like an unsuccessful but fascinating collaboration, to which one partner contributed a dull and involved story of Chinese warfare while the other inserted some amusing satire and a dazzling series of descriptions of the emergence of a long-dormant form of silicon-crystaline life. Published in magazine form in 1930 as WHITE LILY, it will, in this first hard-cover appearance, reward those Taine enthusiasts who are hardy enough to struggle through its duller passages.

Easily the strangest book of the year is THE COMING OF THE SAUCERS, by Kenneth Arnold and Ray Palmer (published by the authors). Indefensible in its writing, editing, construction and documentation, it is still the fullest account yet published of the singular adventures of Mr. Arnold, whose experience near Mount Ranier in 1947 was the beginning of the contemporary "saucer" sightings or (if you prefer) hysteria. Despite Mr. Arnold's Chambers-like skill in remembering new details every time he tells a story, this curious narrative will find its place, if only for its historical interest, in every library and bibliography devoted to the subject.

THREE RECIPES FOR PLETOID SOUP

III

Take: One pletoid and remove
Its outer trygon orbit,
And add, to taste, square polyglove;
The pletoid will absorb it.

Now: Vigorously teleport
Three micro-times the mixture;
Discard what's left in the retort
And serve the cooking fixture.

LEONARD WOLF

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By right of extensive exploration and meticulous reportage Vance Randolph has made the domain of Ozark folklore peculiarly his own. In two delightful books, OZARK SUPERSTITIONS *(Columbia, 1947), and* WE ALWAYS LIE TO STRANGERS *(Columbia, 1951), he has assembled some hundreds of his findings, retold them with affection, humor and marvelously exact reproduction of that "deadpan zest" (to use his own phrase) with which the yarns were first spun out for him. Fortunately, these volumes contain but part of the cream of his crop. Another book of tales told by the Ozark windy-spinners is in preparation; the following (and other stories to appear in F&SF) will be in that collection. In all folk fantasy the humor goes with the grue; you'll enjoy (while not envying) the dilemma of the bachelor who went fishing once too often.*

The Yellow Catfish

by VANCE RANDOLPH

ONE TIME there was an old bachelor lived up on the Meremec, and he was the best noodler in the whole country. He caught more fish with his hands than most fellows could get with a big seine. One evening he was feeling around in a black hole under a bunch of horsetail rushes, and he drug out a slim yellow catfish that would weigh pretty near a hundred pounds. The funny thing was how that fish kept a-hollering, like one of these little squealer-cats they pull out of White River, only louder. It was still squealing when he got it home in the wagon. The rain barrel was about half full, so he just put the catfish in the barrel with its head down. He figured the water would keep it alive, and next morning he'd sell it to the fellow that run the hotel.

Along in the night he heard that fish a-flouncing around like a mule kicking in the barn, but he knowed in reason it couldn't get away, so he just went to sleep. When he woke up there was a woman in bed with him. It wasn't none of the neighbor girls neither, but a plumb stranger. She was a right good-looking woman, and they stayed in bed pretty late. Finally he says maybe we better get up, but the woman didn't seem to have no clothes, so he didn't mention it no more. After while he went outside, and the big catfish was gone out of the rain barrel. It looked like a lot of funny things was happening. The old bachelor thought maybe he was

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going crazy, but he never said nothing. He just went back to the house and crawled in bed again.

So that's how things went for three weeks, and the old bachelor was wore down to a nub. But whenever he got to thinking how to get rid of the woman, she would just look at him. She never said a word, only just looked at him, and went right ahead with what she was a-doing. Some women is terrible single-minded, and it looked like there was the Devil to pay and no pitch hot. The old bachelor felt pretty bad, and hungry besides. Everything was going plumb to hell, and he knowed the whole place was a-growing up in weeds, but there wasn't no help for it.

One morning he woke up before daylight, and the woman was gone. He figured she must have went outdoors for a minute, so he just laid there and tried to think. It come in his mind that he could saddle up old Maud and ride off through the woods. Maybe he'd leave the whole goddam country, and go to Oklahoma or somewhere away out West. Pretty soon he heard a noise outside, something a-flouncing around like a mule kicking in the barn. When he looked out the door, there was the slim yellow catfish in the rain barrel, with its tail sticking up and flapping against the clapboards.

Soon as he seen that fish, the old bachelor run for the barn. He hitched up faster than the boys at the firestation, and pulled out his endgate, and got the rain barrel in the wagon. One big jump, and he was on the seat. Down the lane they went, with the mules at a full gallop and water a-splashing every which way. You'd think he was making for town to sell the fish, but the team took the river road instead. Pretty soon they come to the deep water, and the old bachelor dumped that yellow catfish right back where he got it. The big fish turned round and looked at him just once, then she flipped her tail, and that was the last he ever seen of her.

The old bachelor never done no more noodling, and he never eat no more fish, neither. He says anything that smells like fish made him kind of sick. But he used to walk down by the river sometimes, particular in the spring of the year. They say he would set on the bank for hours, a-looking into a black hole under a bunch of horsetail rushes.

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When Ray Bradbury's THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES *was published in England (as* THE SILVER LOCUSTS*), reviewers were, if anything, even more enthusiastic than in America. The* News Chronicle *justly described the book as an allegory in which "Mr. Bradbury's imagination flickers over the pages like a kind of St. Elmo's fire." The* Punch *reviewer apparently intended a similar compliment in lauding Mr. Bradbury for "firmly fusing probability to poetry" — peculiar praise for a book of science fiction, but an opinion shared, not so politely, by certain Americans of restricted vision. Christopher Isherwood, in the* Observer, *gave perhaps the best clue to Bradbury by finding in his work "the profound psychological realism of a good fairy story." We're proud to present here a brand-new episode of the Chronicles, not included in the book — an episode published before only in one restricted local market and completely rewritten for F&SF. To our minds it is one of the key stories in the entire series — as intimately moving a prose poem as even Bradbury has written and (to confute both* Punch *and the dissident minority) a picture of the near future in which poetry and probability are fused to produce truth.*

The Wilderness

by RAY BRADBURY

OH, *the Good Time has come at last —*

It was twilight and Janice and Leonora packed steadily in their summer house, singing songs, eating little, and holding to each other when necessary. But they never glanced at the window where the night gathered deep and the stars came out bright and cold.

"Listen!" said Janice.

A sound like a steamboat down the river, but it was a rocket in the sky. And beyond that — banjos playing? No, only the summer night crickets in this year 2003. Ten thousand sounds breathed through the town and the weather. Janice, head bent, listened. Long, long ago, 1849, this very street had breathed the voices of ventriloquists, preachers, fortune-tellers,

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fools, scholars, gamblers, gathered at this selfsame Independence, Missouri. Waiting for the moist earth to bake and the great tidal grasses to come up heavy enough to hold the weight of their carts, their wagons, their indiscriminate destinies, and their dreams.

Oh, the Good Time has come at last,
To Mars we are a-going, Sir,
Five Thousand Women in the sky,
That's quite a springtime sowing, Sir!

"That's an old Wyoming song," said Leonora. "Change the words and it's fine for 2003."

Janice lifted a matchbox of food pills, calculating the totals of things carried in those high-axled, tall-bedded wagons. For each man, each woman, incredible tonnages! Hams, bacon slabs, sugar, salt, flour, dried fruits, pilot bread, citric acid, water, ginger, pepper — a list as big as the land! Yet here, today, pills that fit a wristwatch fed you not from Fort Laramie to Hangtown, but all across a wilderness of stars.

Janice threw wide the closet door and almost screamed.

Darkness and night and all the spaces between the stars looked out at her.

Long years ago two things had happened. Her sister had locked her, shrieking, in a closet. And, at a party, playing hide-and-seek, she had run through the kitchen and into a long dark hall. But it wasn't a hall. It was an unlit stair-well, a swallowing blackness. She had run out upon empty air. She had pedaled her feet, screamed, and fallen! Fallen in midnight blackness. Into the cellar. It took a long while, a heart-beat, to fall. And she had smothered in that closet a long, long time without daylight, without friends, no one to hear her screamings. Away from everything, locked in darkness. Falling in darkness. Shrieking!

The two memories.

Now, with the closet door wide, with darkness like a velvet shroud hung before her to be stroked by a trembling hand, with the darkness like a black panther breathing there, looking at her with unlit eyes, the two memories rushed out. Space and a falling. Space and being locked away, screaming. She and Leonora working steadily, packing, being careful not to glance out the window at the frightening Milky Way and the vast emptiness. Only to have the long-familiar closet, with its private night, remind them at last of their destiny.

This was how it would be, out there, sliding toward the stars, in the night, in the great hideous black closet, screaming, but no one to hear. Falling

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forever among meteor clouds and godless comets. Down the elevator shaft. Down the nightmare coal-chute into nothingness.

She screamed. None of it came out of her mouth. It collided upon itself in her chest and head. She screamed. She slammed the closet door! She lay against it! She felt the darkness breathe and yammer at the door and she held it tight, eyes watering. She stood there a long time, until the trembling vanished, watching Leonora work. And the hysteria, thus ignored, drained away and away, and at last was gone. A wristwatch ticked, with a clean sound of normality, in the room.

"Sixty *million* miles." She moved at last to the window as if it were a deep well. "I can't believe that men on Mars, tonight, are building towns, waiting for us."

"The only thing to believe is catching our Rocket tomorrow."

Janice raised a white gown like a ghost in the room.

"Strange, strange. To marry — on another world."

"Let's get to bed."

"No! The call comes at midnight. I couldn't sleep, thinking how to tell Will I've decided to take the Mars Rocket. Oh, Leonora, think of it, my voice traveling 60,000,000 miles on the light-phone to him. I changed my mind so quic[illegible] I'm scared!"

"Our *last* [illegible]t on Earth."

Now they [illegible]ally knew and accepted it, now the knowledge had found them out. They were going away, and they might never come back. They were leaving the town of Independence in the state of Missouri on the continent of North America, surrounded by one ocean which was the Atlantic and another the Pacific, none of which could be put in their traveling cases. They had shrunk from this final knowledge. Now it was facing them. And they were struck numb.

"Our children, they won't be Americans, or Earth people at all. We'll all be Martians, the rest of our lives."

"I don't want to go!" cried Janice, suddenly.

The panic rose in her, with ice and fire.

"I'm afraid! The space, the darkness, the rocket, the meteors! *Everything* gone! Why should I go out there!"

Leonora took hold of her shoulders and held her close, rocking her. "It's a New World. It's like the old days. The men first and the women following."

"Why, why should I go, tell me!"

"Because," said Leonora, at last, quietly, seating her on the bed, "Will is up there."

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His name was good to hear. Janice quieted.

"These men make it so hard," said Leonora. "Used to be if a woman ran 200 miles after a man it was something. Then they made it a thousand miles. And now they put a whole universe between us. But that can't stop us, can it?"

"I'm afraid I'll be a fool on the Rocket."

"I'll be a fool with you." Leonora got up. "Now, let's walk around town, let's see everything one last time."

Janice stared out at the town. "Tomorrow night, this'll all be here, but we won't. People'll wake up, eat, work, sleep, wake again, but we won't know it, and they'll never miss us."

Leonora and Janice moved around each other as if they couldn't find the door.

"Come on."

They opened the door, switched off the lights, stepped out, and shut the door behind them.

In the sky there was a great coming-in and coming-in. Vast flowering motions, huge whistlings and whirlings, snowstorms falling. Helicopters, white flakes, dropping quietly. From west and east and north and south the women were arriving, arriving, their hearts neatly tissue-papered in their suitcases. Through all of the night sky you saw helicopters blizzard down. The hotels were full, private homes were making accommodations, tent cities rose in meadows and pastures like strange, ugly flowers, and the town and the country were warm with more than summer tonight. Warm with women's pink faces and the sunburnt faces of new men watching the sky. Beyond the hills rockets tried their fire, and a sound like a giant organ pressed upon all its keys at once, shuddered every crystal window and every hidden bone. You felt it in your jaw, your toes, your fingers, a shivering.

Leonora and Janice sat in the drugstore among strange women.

"You ladies look pretty, but you sure look sad," said the soda fountain man.

"Two chocolate malteds." Leonora smiled for both of them, as if Janice were mute.

They gazed at the chocolate drink as if it was a rare museum painting. Malts would be scarce, for many years, on Mars.

Janice fussed in her purse and took out an envelope, reluctantly, and laid it on the marble counter.

"This is from Will to me. It came in the rocket mail two days ago. It was this that made up my mind for me, made me decide to go. I didn't tell you. I want you to see it now. Go ahead, read the note."

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Leonora shook the note out of the envelope and read it aloud:

" 'Dear Janice: This is *our* house if you decide to come to Mars. Will.' "

Leonora tapped the envelope again and a color photograph dropped out, glistening, on the counter. It was a picture of a house, a dark, mossy, ancient, caramel-brown, comfortable house with red flowers and green cool ferns bordering it, and a disreputably hairy ivy on the porch.

"But, Janice!"

"What?"

"This is a picture of *your* house, here on Earth, here on Elm Street!"

"No. Look close."

And they looked again, together, and on both sides of the comfortable dark house and behind it was scenery that was not Earth scenery. The soil was a strange color of violet, and the grass was the faintest bit red, and the sky glowed like a gray diamond, and a strange crooked tree grew to one side, looking like an old woman with crystals in her white hair.

"That's the house Will's built for me," said Janice, "on Mars. It helps to look at it. All yesterday, when I had the chance, alone, and was most afraid and panicky, I took out this picture and looked at it."

They both gazed at the dark comfortable house 60,000,000 miles away, familiar but unfamiliar, old but new, a yellow light shining in the right front parlor window.

"That man Will," said Leonora, nodding her head, "knows just what he's doing."

They finished their drinks. Outside, a vast warm crowd of strangers wandered by and the "snow" fell steadily in the summer sky.

They bought many silly things to take with them, bags of lemon candy, glossy women's magazines, fragile perfumes (let the take-off weighers worry later about what constitutes "essential load"); and then they walked out into the town and not minding the expense, rented two belted jackets — two small machines that refused gravity and imitated the butterfly — and touched the delicate controls and felt themselves whispered like white blossom petals over the town. "Anywhere," said Leonora, "anywhere at all."

They let the wind blow them where it would, they let the wind take them through the night of summer apple trees and the night of warm preparation, over the lovely town, over the houses of childhood and other days, over schools and avenues, over creeks and meadows and farms so familiar that each grain of wheat was a golden coin. They blew as leaves must blow before the threat of a fire-wind, with warning whispers and summer lightning crackling among the folded hills. They saw the milk-dust country roads

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where not so long ago they had drifted in moonlit helicopters in great whorls of sound spiraling down to touch beside cool night streams with the young men who were now gone.

They floated in an immense sigh above a town already made remote by the little space between themselves and the earth, a town receding behind them in a black river and coming up in a tidal wave of lights and color ahead, untouchable and a dream now, already smeared in their eyes with nostalgia, with a panic of memory that began before the thing was gone.

Blown quietly, eddying, they gazed secretly at a hundred faces of dear friends they were leaving behind, the lamplit people held and framed by windows which slid by on the wind, it seemed; all of Time breathing them along. There was no tree they did not examine for old confessions of love carved and whittled there, no sidewalk they did not skim across as over fields of mica-snow. For the first time they knew that their town was beautiful and the lonely lights and the ancient bricks beautiful, and they both felt their eyes grow large with the beauty of this feast they were giving themselves. All floated upon an evening carousel, with fitful drifts of music wafting up here and there, and voices calling and murmuring from houses that were whitely haunted by television.

The two women passed like needles, sewing one tree to the next with their perfume. Their eyes were too full, and yet they kept putting away each detail, each shadow, each solitary oak and elm, each passing car upon the small snaking streets below, until not only their eyes but their heads and then their hearts were too full.

I feel like I'm dead, thought Janice, and in the graveyard on a spring night and everything alive but me and everyone moving and ready to go on with life without me. It's like I felt each spring when I was very young, passing the graveyard and weeping for them because they were dead and it didn't seem fair, on nights as soft as that, that I was alive. I was guilty of living. And now, here, tonight, I feel they have taken me from the graveyard and let me go above the town just once more to see what it is like to be living, to be a town and a people, before they slam the black door on me again.

Softly, softly, like two white paper lanterns on a night wind, the women moved over their lifetime and their past, and over the meadows where the tent cities glowed and the highways where supply trucks would be clustered and running until dawn. They hovered above it all for a long time.

The courthouse clock was booming 11:45 when they came like spider webs floating from the stars, touching on the moonlit pavement before Janice's old house. The city was asleep, and Janice's house waited for them to come in searching for *their* sleep, which was not there.

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"Is this *us*, here?" asked Janice. "Janice Smith and Leonora Holmes, in the year 2003?"

"Yes."

Janice licked her lips and stood straight. "I wish it was some other year."

"1492? 1612?" Leonora sighed and the wind in the trees sighed with her, moving away. "It's always Columbus Day or Plymouth Rock Day, and I'll be darned if I know what we women can do about it."

"Be old maids."

"Or, do just what we're doing."

They opened the door of the warm night house, the sounds of the town dying slowly in their ears. As they shut the door, the phone began to ring.

"The call!" cried Janice, running.

Leonora came into the bedroom after her and already Janice had the receiver up and was saying, "Hello, hello!" And the operator in a far city was readying the immense apparatus which would tie two worlds together, and the two women waited, one sitting and pale, the other standing but just as pale, bent toward her.

There was a long pause, full of stars and time, a waiting pause not unlike the last three years for all of them. And now the moment had arrived, and it was Janice's turn to phone through millions upon millions of miles of meteors and comets, running away from the yellow sun which might boil or burn her words or scorch the meaning from them, her voice like a silver needle through everything, in stitches of talking, across the big night, reverberating from the moons of Mars and rushing on. And then her voice found its way to a man in a room in a city there on another world, five minutes by radio away. And her message was this:

"Hello, Will. This is Janice!"

She swallowed.

"They say I haven't much time. A minute."

She closed her eyes.

"I want to talk slow but they say talk fast and get it all in. So, I want to say — I've decided. I will come up there. I'll go on the Rocket tomorrow. I *will* come up there to you, after all. And I love you. I hope you can hear me. I love you. It's been so long. . ."

Her voice motioned on its way to that unseen world. Now, with the message sent, the words said, she wanted to call them back, to censor, to rearrange them, to make a prettier sentence, a fairer explanation of her soul. But already the words were hung between planets and if, by some cosmic radiation, they could have been illuminated, caught fire in vaporous wonder there, her love would have lit a dozen worlds and startled the night side of Earth into a premature dawn, she thought. Now the words were not hers at

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all, they belonged to space, they belonged to no one until they arrived, and they were traveling at 186,000 miles a second to their target.

What will he say to me? What will he say back in *his* minute of time?, she wondered. She fussed with and twisted the watch on her wrist, and the light-phone receiver on her ear crackled and space talked to her with electrical jigs and dances and audible auroras.

"Has he replied?" whispered Leonora.

"Shhh!" said Janice, bending, as if sick.

Then the voice came through space from him.

"I hear him!" cried Janice.

"What does he say?"

The voice called out from Mars and took itself through the places where there was no sunrise or sunset, but always the night with a sun in the middle of the blackness. And somewhere between Mars and Earth everything of the message was lost, perhaps in a sweep of electrical gravity rushing by on the floodtides of a meteor, or interfered with by a rain of silver meteors. In any event, the small words and the unimportant words of the message were washed away. And his voice came through saying only one word:

". . . love . . . "

After that, there was the huge night again and the sound of stars turning and suns whispering to themselves and the sound of her heart, like another world in space, filling her earphones.

"Did you *hear* him?" asked Leonora.

Janice could only nod.

"What did he say, what did he say?" cried Leonora.

But Janice could not tell anyone, it was much too good to tell. She sat, listening to that one word again and again, as her memory played it back to her. She sat listening, while Leonora took the phone away from her without her knowing it, and put it back upon its hook.

Then they were in bed and the lights out and the night wind blowing through the rooms a smell of the long journey in darkness and stars, and their voices talking of tomorrow, and the days after tomorrow which would not be days at all, but day-nights of timeless time; their voices faded away into sleep or wakeful thinking, and Janice lay alone in her bed.

Is this how it was over a century ago, she wondered, when the women, the night before, lay ready for sleep, or not ready, in the small towns of the East, and heard the sound of horses in the night and the creak of the Conestoga wagons ready to go, and the brooding of oxen under the trees, and the cry of children already lonely before their time? All the sounds of

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arrivals and departures into the deep forests and fields, the blacksmiths working in their own red hells through midnight? And the smell of bacons and hams ready for the journeying, and the heavy feel of the wagons like ships foundering with goods, with water in the wooden kegs to tilt and slop across prairies, and the chickens hysterical in their slung-beneath-the-wagon crates, and the dogs running out to the wilderness ahead and, fearful, running back with a look of empty space in their eyes? Is this then how it was so long ago? On the rim of the precipice, on the edge of the cliff of stars. In their time the smell of buffalo, and in our time the smell of the Rocket. Is this then how it was?

And she decided, as sleep assumed the dreaming for her, that yes, yes indeed, very much so, irrevocably, this was as it had always been and would forever continue to be.

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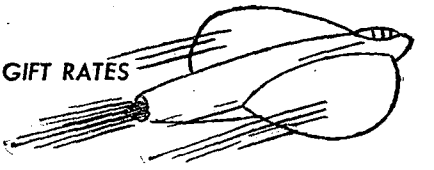

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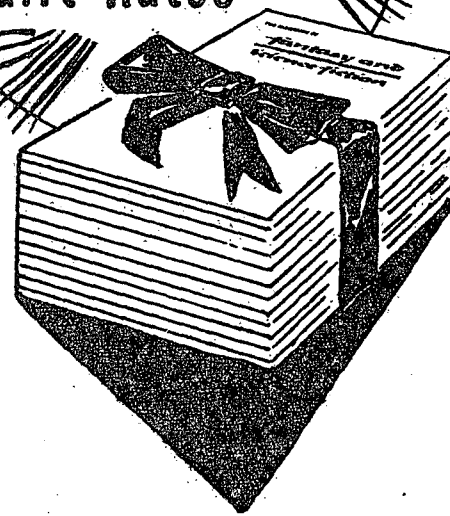

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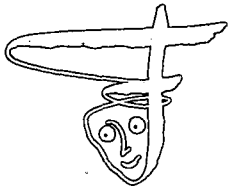

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